

WALTER SCOTT AND FEMININE DISCOURSE

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I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me,
and that the work is entirely my own.

Robert P. Irvine, 17 January 1996.

Abstract

This thesis examines the relation between Scott's fiction and the late eighteenth-century feminine domestic novel as it appears at the interlinked levels of discourse and plot in the Scottish Waverley novels themselves. Scott's fiction brought a new sort of realism to the novel in its enlightenment understanding of society and history as objects of knowledge, but the plots of the novels are not used to signify social or historical reality. Because social history has no ending, narrative closure is provided instead by extra-historical agents in the text.

In Part One I examine how this autonomous agency is derived from the autonomy of young women characters in *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, an autonomy they owe to their status as signifiers of the domestic fiction which dominated the novel in the decades before 1814. The language of the feminine domestic novel appears within the first half of each text in opposition to the realist discourse of the general narrator. This feminine discourse then disappears from the text, but remains as an other to its realist discourse in the form of an agency which can bring the plot to a proper ending as its realist discourse alone cannot. In the last two instances this agency is associated with folk-culture and the supernatural, and I suggest that it owes its survival within the text to its availability as an object of knowledge in that realist discourse, even while it owes its efficacy to the discourse of the domestic novel. Thus the plots of these novels suppress feminine discourse while ultimately depending on it for their closure.

It might be, of course, that Scott is obliged to locate his new type of fiction in relation to this established genre in the early novels as a way of making his texts accessible to an as-yet unestablished readership. And in Part One I indeed see the interdiscursive relations of the text as a replacement for the unavailable intersubjective relation between author and generically-defined reader. However, this dialogue with domestic fiction continues in most of the later Scottish novels too, suggesting that the replacement of the reader with another type of fiction is constitutive of Scott's type of realism rather than a contingency of the establishment of a new genre. At the end of Part One I consider a psycho-analytic explanation for why this might be so on the basis of the theories of Julia Kristeva.

This dialogue continues without the reappearance of the discourse of the domestic novel within the later novels until *Saint*

Ronan's Well and *Redgauntlet*. Parts Two and Three explain this return by tracing the variations Scott produces on the narrative pattern of the first novels in the intervening years. In Part Two I discuss *Rob Roy*, *The Monastery* and *Saint Ronan's Well* as allegories of the relation between the two types of discourse, in order to show how *Saint Ronan's Well* dramatizes its own failure to be a domestic novel in the death, rather than marriage, of its heroine. In Part Three I show how Scott effects a more positive renegotiation of his fiction with the domestic novel by reverting, in *Redgauntlet*, to the narrative pattern of *The Heart of Midlothian*, where the British State acts as an alternative agent of feminine discourse, guarantor of a happy ending, and restores a feminine creative dialogue to the text. I conclude by suggesting that the state has this role in *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Redgauntlet* because the social-realist text, unlike earlier genres, constructs the nation itself as its implied readership.

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Introduction

In 1932, the centenary of the death of Walter Scott, a letter appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* claiming that *Waverley*, the novel that began the published series that bears its name, was not the first of that series to be written. Una Pope-Hennessy, who had recently published a biography of Scott, suggested that *Guy Mannering*, *Saint Ronan's Well*, and the first part of *Redgauntlet* were all written before *Waverley*, although only published after the latter's success.¹ That Scott should have written such a good novel as *Waverley* at the first attempt, and that, given such an obvious talent, he refrained from exercising it until fairly late in life, had always seemed implausible, she claimed. Donald Carswell, in a letter published the following week, added *The Black Dwarf* and *The Monastery* to this list.² In a review article in *Nineteenth Century*, he suggested that a pile of pre-*Waverley* manuscripts, on which Scott could draw when under pressure from Constable for a quick return on their huge advances, also explained Scott's otherwise staggering rate of output in the years after 1814.³

Pope-Hennessy uses two sorts of evidence from the novels themselves to support her theory. One is the apparent autobiographical content of *Saint Ronan's Well*, *Guy Mannering*,

¹ "The Dates of the Waverley Novels." *T.L.S.* 28 April 1932: 311. Pope-Hennessy had already suggested, in a letter to *The Scotsman*, that *Saint Ronan's Well* had probably been written in 1797-8 (16 March, 1932: 10).

² *T.L.S.* 5 May 1932: 331.

³ "The Legend of Abbotsford." *Nineteenth Century* CXII (Sept. 1932): 374-84.

and *Redgauntlet*; the other is their use of the alien narrative mode of the novel of manners (in the first instance) or the epistolary novel (in the latter two). She indeed seems to regard these as one and the same sort of evidence, as if techniques from the youth of the novel were the natural means for describing one's own. In the case of *Saint Ronan's Well*,

There is, as far as I know, no other recorded example in the annals of fiction-writing of an author "deliberately rejecting the romantic" . . . for a few weeks and then producing an immature realistic novel showing the direct influence of earlier novelists, and, more than this, describing in vivid scenes the persons and places among which the most exciting period of his life was spent . . .⁴

Much later, Pope-Hennessy and Carswell were to add the Osbaldistone Hall chapters of *Rob Roy* to the pre-*Waverley* manuscripts, again on the combined grounds of autobiographical content and (this time, first-person) narrative technique.⁵ Carswell justified the inclusion of *The Monastery* on the grounds of bad construction from "the worst elements of Mrs Radcliffe and 'Monk' Lewis," its contrast in this with the novels that come before and after it (*Ivanhoe* and *The Abbot*) and the

⁴ "The Dates of the Waverley Novels." Pope-Hennessy is quoting John Buchan's *Walter Scott*, and referring to Scott's courtship of Charlotte Charpentier. Similarly, " 'Redgauntlet' is carried on for nearly half its course in the old epistolary style of Richardson . . . In the epistles Scott describes his own youth, his father, his great friend Willie Clerk . . . Mr Vanbeest Brown [in *Guy Mannering*] seems to incorporate old notes made during tramps in the Cheviots and Cumberland and 'raids' into Liddesdale. These appear to be the fragments of another epistolary narrative, and Julia's letters an imitation of the conventional novel of his boyhood."

⁵ "'Rob Roy': A New Interpretation." *The Glasgow Herald* 3 July 1937: 4.

discontinuity of the time-scheme between it and its sequel; *The Black Dwarf* he included on the grounds of sheer badness.⁶

The celebration of the Scott centenary in 1932 was a muted and uncertain affair: the literary colossus that he was to the Victorians had very obviously gone, and the twentieth century had yet to build its own Scott to put in its place. But the "apprentice theory" (as it came to be known) is of interest as more than a symptom of cultural confusion. As a theory of the order in which the Waverley Novels were written it has been shown to be completely wrong;⁷ its interest in the autobiographical content of the novels, and in the autobiographical context of their writing, we may now regard as generally irrelevant to the meaning of the novels themselves; but it identifies a problem, the lack of coherence within the novels as a series, and within some of the novels usually taken as Scott's best, that has never been seriously dealt with. In particular it raises the question of Scott's curious experiment in the domestic novel, and then reversion to Jacobite historical fiction, after a series of very successful but utterly different romances: *Saint Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet*, the novels of 1824. And in drawing attention to Scott's relation to "the conventional novel of his boyhood," in so far as Scott's own texts partake, at points, in the style of that novel, Pope-Hennessy and Carswell provide us with the key to that problem.

⁶ "Sir Walter's Secret: A Literary Inquest." *The Scots Magazine* XX. 3 (9 Dec. 1933): 194.

⁷ Robert D. Mayo. "The Chronology of the Waverley Novels: the Evidence of the Manuscripts." *P.M.L.A.* LXIII (1948): 935-49.

Social realism

To turn to Scott's relation to the novel as it was written in his youth and his own early days as a novelist is to turn the opposite way to most recent critics when they want to put Scott in literary-historical perspective. Much more attention has been paid to the effects of the Waverley Novels on nineteenth-century fiction than to the effects of eighteenth-century fiction on the Waverley Novels. We have discovered, beyond the Scott the Victorians made, the Scott who made the Victorians. What, then, were Scott's gifts to his descendants? The most obvious was a new sort of realism in the novel. Scott's stories portray not isolated individual characters, nor impersonal historical forces, but "the organic relation of the vitally individual with the historically representative, the dramatizing of public crisis as operative in the most concrete human relationships - private, domestic, personal."⁸ His characters "are comprehensible only as part of a living society and of a time that determines the possibilities of their most private dreams."⁹ This is the sort of realism that I am going to call social realism for the purposes of this thesis. It is the realism that Scott shares with Dickens and George Eliot. It is quite distinct from the satiric realism of Henry Fielding, or the domestic realism of Frances Burney, for it claims a cognitive purpose, to be a way of knowing the world, rather than

⁸ Francis R. Hart, *Scott's Novels: The Plotting of Historical Survival* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1966) 10.

⁹ George Levine, *The Realistic Imagination: English Fiction from Frankenstein to Lady Chatterley* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) 92.

the moral purpose of improving or affecting the reader.¹⁰ It has eighteenth-century roots, indeed, but they are philosophical rather than fictional.

If the origins of social realism are philosophical, it is perhaps appropriate that objections to it should arise from philosophical (or at least anti-philosophical) grounds. This is in effect what has happened with the poststructuralist questioning of the basic presuppositions of realism, seeing its "attempt to use language to get beyond language, to discover some non-verbal truth out there" as blindly forgetful of the inevitably self-referential nature of language.¹¹ To argue thus is to miss the self-consciousness with which realist texts make their referential claims, their awareness of the difficulties involved in describing an extra-linguistic world, what George Levine in his excellent study has called "the struggle inherent in any 'realist' effort -- the struggle to avoid the inevitable conventionality of language in pursuit of the unattainable unmediated reality."¹² However, as Levine goes on to note, Scott's work, although it constitutes the first inscription of social-realist presuppositions in the novel, does not seem to share this sense of struggle. As well as an enlightenment conception of social reality, Scott has inherited

¹⁰ This absolute distinction between cognitive and rhetorical purpose obviously needs to be heavily qualified: see footnote 31 to p.19 below.

¹¹ Levine, *The Realistic Imagination* 6. One can see this suspicion, for example, in Roland Barthes, who names as "denotation" what is basically the realist claim of the "classic" (that is, nineteenth-century social-realist) text: "[D]enotation is not the first meaning, but pretends to be so; under this illusion, it is ultimately no more than the *last* of the connotations (the one which seems both to establish and to close the reading), the superior myth by which the text pretends to return to the nature of language, to language as nature . . ." (Roland Barthes, *S/Z* trans. Richard Miller. [Oxford: Blackwell, 1990] 9).

¹² Levine 8.

from the eighteenth century a much more modest understanding of fiction as such, that is, as primarily entertainment:

. . . he suffers no Victorian or modernist anguish in his struggle for the facts; rather, he seems sensibly Johnsonian. Committed to truthfulness, and therefore to assuring his readers that they are reading fictions, he was not concerned, as Henry James was to be, with sustaining illusion.¹³

This seems very odd. Why should Scott of all people, constituting as he does a turning point, *the* turning point, in European literary realism, be immune from the anxieties intrinsic to the tradition he helped create? And yet Levine's observation is correct. There is a split in Scott's novels between their reference to social and historical fact (the possibility of such reference never being questioned), and their self-deprecating recognition of their own fictionality. But it is a split, and not a tension. For Scott, the creative imagination (or language) does not take any part in constituting what we think of as "reality", and hence there is no reason to worry about how real (or prelinguistic) that perceived reality is.

This leaves Levine dissatisfied with those points in the *Waverley* Novels where Scott makes light of their fictional nature. He takes as an extreme example the ending of *Old Mortality*, where Peter Pattieson, the fictional author of the *Tales of My Landlord*, describes how he consulted with Miss Martha Buskbody, over the tea-table, about how he should end his story. One of Scott's grimmest portrayals of failed revolution, which gives a detailed picture of the social, political, and cultural

¹³ Levine 88.

conditions behind the Covenanters' revolt of 1679, ends with the recommendation of a happy ending from "a young lady who has carried on the profession of mantua-making at Ganderscleugh and in the neighbourhood, with great success, for about forty years."¹⁴

The sequence is actually funny at the expense of popular taste but it is also embarrassingly incongruous. It implies Scott's radical lack of interest in his own plot, and reminds us again of the severe disjunction between the imagined and the real that marks his narratives . . . [T]he conventions in which Miss Buskbody is interested belong to a different order of writing . . . Lovers must be matched, morals must be carefully educed, villains must be punished, and all loose ends must be carefully tied. The struggle to bring literary form and plausible content together was the task of realists who followed Scott, who took the "creative imagination" more seriously than he.¹⁵

So long as Scott rigorously separates fiction from reality, in other words, he cannot make meaningful that which is both essential to the novel as a novel, but also ineradicably fictional: namely, the plot, and in particular the necessity of bringing the story to an ending.

To understand the importance of the Waverley Novels for the history of nineteenth-century realism one must understand them in other than realist terms. The novel as a genre before 1814 was not incomplete: it had its own rules, evoked its own expectations in its readers, and individual novels fulfilled those rules and expectations more or less well without reference to the standards that were to be set for the novel in a later age. Scott could not change those rules and expectations without engaging with them as they already were. Because little has been said

¹⁴ *Old Mortality*, "Conclusion" 349.22-24.

¹⁵ Levine 91.

about the impact of the novel as it existed before 1814 on the nature of the Waverley Novels, criticism has tended to emphasize that which makes *Waverley*, for example, other than a novel (a theory of history, an antiquarian collection, an appropriation of oral culture), that which sets it apart from its predecessors as an originating force, rather than the ways in which it renegotiates the terms of its novelness in order to make the assimilation of these other things possible. Scott's own defence of his work in terms of its antiquarian function rather than its more purely literary qualities must bear some of the blame for this. In the Advertisement to *The Antiquary* he writes that he has been "more solicitous to describe manners minutely, than to arrange in any case an artificial and combined narration, and have but to regret that I felt myself unable to unite these two requisites of a good Novel" ("Advertisement" 3:19-22). Ina Ferris comments on this passage, "Quietly Scott abandons the 'good novel,' simply by choosing not to write one."¹⁶ It is not as simple as that. From the start, from *Waverley*, Scott is aware of another sort of fiction in relation to which he must define his own. He does not begin the genre entirely afresh by turning to other, extra-novelistic texts as his inspiration. On the contrary, as soon as the extra-novelistic is incorporated in the Waverley Novels, it is marked by its novelistic context and used to novelistic ends. My argument here will be that this context and these ends are determined by another sort of fiction which Scott does not name, but does not

¹⁶ Ina Ferris, "Story-Telling and the Subversion of Literary Form in Walter Scott's Fiction," *Genre* 18 (1985): 26.

reject.¹⁷ Through the study of their self-situation in relation to that fiction, we will be able to understand their meaning as novels, rather than as something else.

Feminine discourse

This thesis will restrict itself to those of Scott's novels most obviously social-realist in the sense described above: that is, to the novels where the society being described is that of late seventeenth-, eighteenth-, or in the case of *Saint Ronan's Well*, nineteenth-century Scotland.¹⁸ When Scott goes further back in time, and further afield, his realism becomes much more problematic, and my interest here is not with the nature of Scott's social realism as such.¹⁹ My interest is rather in its relation to an earlier type of realism, the domestic realism of Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen, and a host of other female authors

¹⁷ A sort of fiction that he uses to represent that which is outside the terms of his historical realism. Jane Millgate's interpretation of the conclusion to *Old Mortality* as "a way of drawing authorship itself into the debate about freedom of choice and action embodied in the main narrative" is an example of the critical tendency to subsume under historical and political themes aspects of these texts that are actually meaningful *in opposition to* the historical and political (Walter Scott: *The Making of the Novelist* [Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1984] 129). This tendency we shall often come across in the course of this thesis.

¹⁸ With the one exception of *The Monastery*, for reasons which will become clear later: *The Monastery*, set in the mid-sixteenth century, is on the border between the realistic and the romantic modes of the Waverley Novels.

¹⁹ A study of the different sorts or degrees of social realism in the Waverley Novels (and there are more than two: *The Fortunes of Nigel* is obviously much more realistic than, say, *Ivanhoe*) is called for. It might help explain why, if Victorian fiction was made possible by Scott's social realism, and the Scottish novels are his most social-realistic, the Victorians reserved their greatest enthusiasm for the likes of *Ivanhoe*, that is, precisely the *least* realistic in nineteenth-century terms.

writing in the three decades or so before the publication of *Waverley* in 1814.²⁰ In this period, the novel had been largely written by women and, although it is hard to be sure about such things, read by women. The other way in which Scott's novels created "the enabling environment for the form itself of the nineteenth-century novel" was by making it again a genre that deserved the attention of an educated, privileged, and above all *male* readership, and thus made possible its reappropriation by male writers.²¹ Scott remasculinized the novel; in doing so he raised its cultural status in a way that made possible the genre's centrality to Victorian culture.

Some critical attention has been paid to Scott's relation to the genres of eighteenth-century fiction, to the complexity of his inheritance from the picaresque novel of Fielding and Smollett, from the sentimentalists, and from the gothic romance.²² But the

²⁰ I shall consider the extent and distinguishing features of domestic fiction as a genre in the course of chapters 1 and 2.

²¹ Judith Wilt, *Secret Leaves: The Novels of Sir Walter Scott* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) 16. "We cannot but remark," wrote Scott in 1825, "the number of highly talented women, who have, within our time of novel-reading, distinguished themselves advantageously in this department of literature." He lists the most famous women novelists (see pp. 60-1 below) before adding, "we think that it would be impossible to match against these names the same number of masculine competitors, arising within the same space of time." ("Charlotte Smith," in Ioan Williams [ed.] *Sir Walter Scott on Novelists and Fiction* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968] 190). After Scott's own fiction, the novel was no longer gendered female in this way.

²² Hardly anyone has written a book about Scott without comparing his realism to Fielding's. For his relation to sentimentalism, see P.D. Garside, "Scott, the Eighteenth Century and the New Man of Sentiment," *Anglia* 103.1-2 (1985): 71-89; H.E. Shaw, "Scott, Mackenzie and Structure in *The Bride of Lammermoor*," *Studies in the Novel* 13.4 (1981): 349-366; E. Zimmerman, "Fragments of History and the Man of Feeling," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 23.3(1990): 283-300. For Scott and the Gothic, see Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), and Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

relation of the Waverley Novels to domestic fiction, as it appears in a recent study of the gender-politics of their success, Ina Ferris's *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, seems to be very simple. They took its place. Domestic fiction was moved aside and replaced by Scott's historical fiction as the culture's dominant prose narrative genre.

... [T]he reviews ... open up a space -- higher, deeper, broader than that of women's writing -- for the critic and for the male reader and writer of novels. And into this space, answering certain key male anxieties, came the not-so-anonymous Waverley Novels ...²³

We find another feminist critic of Scott, Judith Wilt, making a very similar assumption when she turns to the place of Scott in relation to the feminine fiction before him and the Victorian fiction that came after:

... Scott supplied the element of political content, of the history of national ideas, missing from the Edenic epics of private conscience which constituted the "history" of the protagonists of eighteenth-century novels ...²⁴

she writes, as if the novel in the previous century had been waiting for the Waverley Novels as their conclusion, their consummation indeed but also their effacement. The assumption once again is that Scott's work simply replaced what had gone before with something more complete.

Ferris's argument is concerned with the reception of the Waverley Novels rather than than their form or content. She also

²³ Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History and the Waverley Novels* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991) 78.

²⁴ Wilt 8.

focuses more on the construction by the periodicals of a trope of female *reading* (romantic and bad), and its subsequent male, Waverley equivalent, than on the other trope whose deployment she describes, that of feminine *writing* (anti-romantic and good). This latter is what she calls the proper novel, and what I am calling the domestic novel. The other recent ground-breaking study of the cultural effects of Scott's fiction, Ian Duncan's *Modern Romance*, also concentrates on Scott's relation to the romance tradition rather than the domestic novel; Duncan explores this relation as it is worked out within the structure of the Waverley Novels themselves, rather than as it is constructed in the periodical reviews.

Duncan and Ferris indeed make very similar points with regard to the workings of romance *within* Scott's fiction:

As it is constructed in the reviews, . . . the trope of Waverley reading turns out to be a positive, male-inflected form of the well-established negative trope of female reading. Absorbed, repetitive, and escapist, Waverley reading validates romance by giving it a different gender and taking it to a different end. But the journey is much the same as in female romance, so that, in validating romance, the manly and healthy Author of Waverley partakes oddly of that which his fictions were credited with expelling.²⁵

Writing of *Waverley*, Duncan writes:

Thematically, historical experience banishes romance illusion; but this progression is articulated by a labyrinthine formal logic of romance which secures for Waverley the tragi-comic destiny of a private life beyond historical process . . . The modern, domestic subjectivity produced by the narrative remains covertly androgynous, under feminine predominance . . .²⁶

²⁵ Ferris, *Achievement* 247.

²⁶ Duncan 13-14.

But note how Duncan tends here to combine romance and domesticity under the sign of their common femininity: when we maintain the distinction, we will find that the Waverley Novels are shaped by their banishment of domestic fiction rather than romance, and that it is of this "expelled" domestic fiction that the novels themselves nevertheless "partake oddly."

I want to argue that the defining other of the Waverley Novels is the domestic novel, and not the gothic or any other sort of romance.²⁷ This thesis will show how these novels re-place domestic fiction within their own texts, then erase it. In doing so it demonstrates the importance of the plots, and particularly the plot endings, of the Scottish novels in mediating between domestic fiction and social realism. For Miss Martha Buskbody's gender is not incidental to her role as supplier of a proper ending for *Old Mortality*. Closure is usually brought about in these texts by a feminine agency. What sets *Old Mortality* apart is the way in which this feminine agency is placed outside the main story, in the framing narrative of Peter Pattieson: in the texts we will be examining, the feminine character who provides closure is one within the story she closes. I want now to outline how this feminine agency within the story is linked to the domestic novel.

²⁷ This is indeed a point made by Ferris in her conclusion, although again in terms of periodical criticism rather than the novels themselves: "In a peculiar way, it was not so much blowsy female romance that threatened the masculinity -- and hence literariness -- of early nineteenth-century fiction as the contained feminine novel of domestic virtue . . . it was the rational form of the proper novel with its valorization of the space of 'modern civilization' that was placed in definitive opposition to Scott's historical mode . . ." (Ferris, *Achievement* 252). Just how peculiar Scott's response to this threat really was will become apparent in the course of this thesis. I will engage with Ferris's approach to the Waverley Novels in chapter 1.

In Scott's first novels, those that I will be examining in Part 1 of this study, domestic fiction is present by their inclusion of its *discourse* as part of the text. This might amount to no more than the use of an odd word or phrase characteristic of the older genre (*Waverley*); it might mean a brief dialogue between two young women (*Waverley*, *The Black Dwarf*); or it might mean the inclusion of whole chapters narrated in feminine epistolary mode (*Guy Mannering*). The heteroglot nature of the Scottish novels was noticed long before Mikhail Bakhtin taught us its name, but the contrasting languages identified were invariably the fluid Scots of the lower-class characters and the halting English of the narrator and his young heroes and heroines. Judith Wilt distinguishes a third, in the biblical phrasing and cadences of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality*. This she describes as "enacting, enabling language, performative, magic, ultimately divine, always creatively breaking out from feeling toward doing" as opposed to the "instructing language, informative, tensely restraining, indeed almost disabling language" of narrator and young lovers alike.²⁸ But Scott's young gentry don't *always* speak in this latter mode: in some novels, the heroine has a language all of her own, which is appropriated from domestic fiction. And in these cases, the role of the heroine's speech within the story is also enacting, enabling, and performative.

It is this characterization of the discourse of the domestic novel as active, as creative, along with its feminine gender, that links the feminine agents that close the plots of the early novels

²⁸ Wilt 81.

with the domestic discourse within them. How does Scott thus characterize the discourse of the domestic novel? Julia Mannering and Matilda Marchmont in *Guy Mannering*, and Isabella Vere and Lucy Ilderton in *The Black Dwarf*, read fiction, and understand themselves in terms of that fiction (this being something that the heroines of domestic novels characteristically do). What they understand about themselves in these terms, more importantly, is their capacity to act independently of their aloof or bullying father-figures. The dialogue, written or spoken, in which two young ladies characterize their situation in terms of fiction, opens to them the possibility that they might author that fiction. The discourse of the domestic novel that they speak seems to them potentially empowering.

This distinguishes domestic discourse from the dominant discourse of the Waverley Novels, the cautious, heavily qualified language of the omniscient narrator, one that he (and the narrator's discourse is as unavoidably masculine as domestic discourse is feminine) shares with the hero and often with other male characters as well. No-one is enabled by this discourse. Its function is not to create a fiction, but rather to describe, to report historical and social realities that exist (or have existed) outside the text.

Thus the two discourses that I have described are distinguished by their different relations to reality. It is here that some consideration of the word "discourse" and its theoretical underpinning becomes necessary. I begin Part 1 with a discussion of Foucault's use of the term, concluding (at the end

of chapter 1) that Foucault's theories do not on their own provide a model for understanding the interplay of discourses *within* a text such as that which we find in these novels. I end Part 1, in chapter 4, by suggesting an alternative model for such interplay based on the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and Julia Kristeva. Some ambiguity can arise from the use of the word "discourse" to translate both Foucault's French *discours* and Bakhtin's Russian *slovo*: where Foucault places *discours* in a rigorously delineated hierarchy, Bakhtin uses *slovo* very flexibly. However, in both theoretical contexts these expressions name a type of language defined by its social use, a type of language which exists outside of and prior to the particular text and is appropriated by the particular text. This understanding, which Foucault and Bakhtin share, makes discourse a useful concept in analysing the role of domestic fiction within the Waverley Novels. Both the feminine speech of the young heroine and the enlightenment vocabulary of the narrator are discourses in this sense.

Then again, both Bakhtin and Foucault, and Kristeva in some of her earlier work, also share a conception of discourses as the mediators of a pre-existing reality, modes of access to a real world out there beyond the language itself. Every discourse, on this view, is a cognitive structure, a way of knowing something. This is a conception of discourse which, it will already be clear, does not fit the discourse of the domestic novel; does not fit the discourse of the domestic novel, that is, *as it is used in Scott's texts*.²⁹ For I am not claiming that the domestic novel, in

²⁹ The attention paid to the role of the plot in the relations between discourses suggests a third theoretical context, that of Russian formalist

individual instances or as a genre, does not represent a particular reality, does not have its own cognitive content. But the discourse of the domestic novel is reproduced in the early Waverley Novels as if its function was not cognitive but *performative*. All utterances, of course, may be both a way of knowing something and at the same time a way of exercising power within the community of our listeners. The Waverley Novels are a case in point: as Ina Ferris explains, novels whose immediate function seems to be to recover the social reality of past ages (their cognitive function) also had an effect on the social reality of their own age (their performative function), making the novel a respectable and masculine genre. But for texts which had such profound effects, the Waverley Novels are often anxious to play down their potential influence. This is not an anxiety present in the domestic novel itself, which always had a more-or-less explicitly acknowledged didactic function. Scott takes this didactic function, the address of the domestic novel to young women, its instructive dialogue with them, and makes it the function of feminine discourse within his first novels to the exclusion of any cognitive content. The dialogue of young women in these texts is not about the representation of reality: it is

and French structuralist writing. "Discourse" there translates *sjuzhet* or *récit*, the way in which the story (*fabula* or *histoire*) is told in a particular telling, including any temporal reordering of the events of the story. This use of the word overlaps with Foucault and Bakhtin's translators, in that all are referring to the concrete level in the text, the use of specific sorts of words and sentences at specific points in the text and their interrelation. This accumulation of potential meanings in "discourse" is also useful to me, precisely because of the role I see for plotting in the interrelation of the text's discourses. When I talk of discourse in the novel, there are always two sets of relations at stake: those between the various discourses present, and those between the various discourses and the story that they combine in telling.

about the generation of useful fictions. It is characterized as a performative use of speech in direct opposition to the purely cognitive discourse of the narrator.³⁰

This opposition of feminine discourse, at once an appropriation from the domestic novel and characterized, in its new context, as a purely performative use of speech, to the cognitive function of the general narrative is another thing that it has in common with the feminine agents of closure within the story. And this is the clue to the reason for its inclusion. This inclusion of domestic discourse within the novels is, I suggest in chapter 1, made necessary by the other discourse that Scott uses, the dominant social-realist one. To this discourse, an enlightenment discourse of social history, endings are entirely alien. Realism, as Levine suggests, is not a struggle for Scott: that there might be a difficulty intrinsic in the effort to express a non-verbal reality in language probably never occurred to him. But the particular language in which that reality can alone be expressed cannot at the same time describe endings, for endings exist only in fiction, and not in reality. To bring a story to an

³⁰ Another way of looking at the opposition between this masculine, cognitive discourse and a performative, feminine one, and at the cultural consequences of Scott's fiction, might be in terms of Elizabeth Ermarth's theory of realism as consensus. "On the one hand the realistic consensus produces and supports the existence of an objective world; consensus literally 'objectifies' the world . . . What is so, *is* so, because many different viewpoints agree that it is so . . . On the other hand, the objective world produces consensus . . . (Elizabeth Deedes Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1983] 77). This is true, I think, of a realism that can take its basic cognitive function for granted: in a text like Scott's, where the terms of social realism are being established, consensus must be *created* by the expulsion of points of view which are not even potentially consensual in this way; which are not alternative perspectives on a shared reality but an alternative to realism *per se*. See chapter 2, p.132 fn.71 and chapter 3, p.171 fn.9 below.

ending is to create, not to report; it is a performative use of language, the fulfillment of a promise to the novel reader, that falls outside the cognitive aspirations of the text. Scott's inclusion of feminine discourse in his first novels at once names this creativity that is demanded of him as an author, and denies his responsibility for it. Fictionality is gendered feminine in the shape of the discourse of the domestic novel, and a feminine agent is then called upon within the story to provide its fictional closure.³¹ The *Waverley Novels*' inclusion of the public spheres of history and politics may have made the novel once again a masculine genre, but that which above all makes them fictional, namely the organization of their plots, remains ascribed to the feminine, domestic novel that preceded them.

The appropriation by a novel like *Guy Mannering* of the discourse of the domestic novel is thus explicable in terms of the needs of a text written in an originally non-fictional discourse; the use of a feminine character to bring such a text to closure is explicable in terms of the possibilities available for action in the

³¹ Ian Duncan also observes that plot is in and of itself non-mimetic, but assimilates the formulaic plot of the nineteenth-century novel once more to romance: "Romance is the essential principle of fiction: its *difference* from a record of 'reality', of 'everyday life' . . . [E]ven as the novel began to totalize its mimetic range it reasserted fiction, and not mimesis, as its critical principle, in an elaborate commitment to plot. Fiction in these novels is the effect above all of plot . . ." Duncan goes on, in words which well explain the way in which the realism of Victorian novels is harnessed to social ends, "To read a plot . . . is to imagine a transformation of life and its conditions, and not their mere reproduction . . . The old commonplace of an antithetical relation between romance and reality . . . produces a new, dialectical figure of romance as the fulcrum against which . . . reality can be turned around" (Duncan 2). However, these latter comments seem to me to apply perfectly to Dickens and not at all to Scott, for Scott simply does not have the radical social agenda of the Victorians. Scott's plots, as I will describe them, are fulcra against which *literary* reality, and no other, is turned.

terms of that non-fictional discourse. But this leaves open the question of why it is necessary to *suppress* femininity at the level of discourse before this closure can be brought about. For before a feminine *agent* can do this, the domestic *voice* of the heroine is silenced, leaving the social-realist discourse uninterrupted dominance of the text: the plot of both *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* work to this end. Feminine fictionality is suppressed as a discourse before it brings that story to a close in the alternative form of a feminine character.

Ina Ferris suggests an answer in the conclusion to her book when she writes that "in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the anxiety of influence for a male novelist was inevitably shaped by gender."³² In chapter 4 of the present study I consider what an "anxiety of influence" might be for a novelist, and will, like Harold Bloom, take psychoanalytic theories as my starting point. Judith Wilt suggests that one could understand the Victorian novelists' relationship to Scott as an example of Bloom's "clinamen" or "swerve": they misread him, that is, in order to free themselves to create their own fictions, a move "more profound than the simple rises and falls of reputation."³³ Yet a novel is not like an epic poem in its relation to its predecessors, precisely because of its capacity to include the discourse, the very style of speech, of its predecessors within itself in the way that Scott does. It is to outline a *novelistic*

³² Ferris 253.

³³ Wilt 3. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

equivalent of Bloom's poetic misprison that I turn here to the theories of Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva.

Scott's plots thus do not, it is true, express his novels' relation to reality, but neither are they meaningless. Instead, they express his novels' relation to fiction: to domestic fiction, and to their own fictionality understood in terms of domestic fiction. The relation of Scott's language to reality is not a problem for him as it was to be for the Victorians, but the relation of his language to fiction *is*.³⁴

In what follows, the expressions "domestic discourse" and "feminine discourse" are more or less interchangeable: but I have tended to use "domestic discourse" when I want to emphasize a particular instance's relation to the genre from which it has been appropriated, and "feminine discourse" when I want to emphasize the autonomous fictionality that it shares with other, non-novelistic discourses in Scott's texts, and does not share with these texts' dominant social realism. The letters of Julia Mannering, for example, may be described as domestic discourse in so far as they participate in the conventions and concerns of eighteenth-century epistolary fiction; in so far as they share a performative rather than a cognitive function with the speech of Meg Merrilies, they are classed as feminine discourse.

³⁴ The shaping fear of the Waverley Novels is thus not Scott's fear of *novelty*, as Millgate argues ("Scott seems, at some deep level, to have been afraid of confronting his own originality," Millgate x) but his fear of *novelness*, of fiction itself.

Explaining 1824

Working through those novels in which feminine discourse is an actor, those on which this study will focus, we find a remarkable thing: they are precisely those listed by Una Pope-Hennessy and Donald Carswell in 1932, with one addition, *The Heart of Midlothian*.³⁵ They were right to identify an immaturity in these texts; that immaturity is not an incompleteness in Scott's evolving social realism, however, but its inescapable accompaniment. Pope-Hennessy and Carswell simply projected as a chronological development a tension that we can see at work synchronically in individual texts.

I want to leave suspended the question of whether there is *any* chronological development in the course of Scott's career as a novelist until my conclusion. That said, I imply from the start that the position of particular novels in the sequence must have some significance, considering in Part One as I do three of Scott's first novels, *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. I begin by describing how *Waverley*, while it claims to constitute itself in relation to an extra-textual reality rather than in relation to any particular generically-defined readership, in fact constitutes itself in relation to another type of fiction: the domestic novel. I discuss the cognitive claims of the text's social realism in general in terms of Foucault's definition of "discourse,"

³⁵ The "immaturity" of the last volume of this novel has been so obvious to later critics, that I can't think why Pope-Hennessy and Carswell did not include it as a product of Scott's apprentice years; unless they felt inhibited from implying, as they would have to in this case, that this last part was written years before the story to which it provides a conclusion.

and in particular the enlightenment discourse of theoretical history.

In the case of all three novels, I then describe how the language of the feminine domestic novel appears within the first half of each text, and is characterized in each case as performative and intersubjective, in opposition to the cognitive, realist discourse of the general narrator. In my chapter on *Guy Mannering* I discuss the way in which this opposition repeats at the level of discourse the heroine's problematic autonomy from her father-figures in the novels of Richardson and Burney. In all three novels, this feminine discourse then disappears from the text, but remains as an other to its cognitive discourse in the form of a feminine agency, which can work within the text to bring it to a proper ending as its dominant narrative discourse cannot. The agent in question is Rose Bradwardine in *Waverley*, Meg Merrilies in *Guy Mannering*, and Elshie the Dwarf in *The Black Dwarf*. Rose provides closure by being ellided in the narrative middle and then revealed at the end; Meg by helping the hero gain his rightful inheritance and hence his bride; Elshie by saving the heroine from a forced marriage, so that she too can marry her lover. In the last two instances this closure-generating agency is associated with folk-culture and a belief in the supernatural, and I suggest that it owes its survival within the text to its availability as an object of knowledge in accordance with the enlightenment paradigm adopted by the discourse of that text, even while it owes its efficacy to the performative function it shares with the suppressed discourse of the domestic novel. Thus

the plots of these novels suppress feminine discourse while ultimately depending on it for their closure, and hence their fictionality, and hence their very status as novels. Novelness and realism are not reconciled here: they are juxtaposed, and that juxtaposition is mediated by the plot.

The domestic novel does not make the same discursive appearance as it does early in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* in any of Scott's novels for the following eight years, but its proxies remain active in the plots of many of them: it is as if the pattern of suppression and disguised return that we see in the early novels is also acted out in the series as a whole. In Parts Two and Three I trace the variations Scott produces on this basic pattern in some of the later novels, in an attempt to explain the return of feminine discourse in 1824, in *Saint Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet* respectively.³⁶ These two novels are so different

³⁶ The reasons for discussing the particular Scottish novels that I do will I hope be obvious in the course of my discussion of them, but I must comment here on those that I have omitted. I have already suggested that *Old Mortality* is unusually uniform in its cognitive discourse, perhaps because the speech of the Covenanters has from the start, as Wilt suggests, the performative function normally filled by feminine discourse. *A Legend of Montrose* also falls into this category of pure historical fiction: I am not suggesting that a realist text *cannot* generate its own ending, merely that Scott seems extremely unwilling to let it. *The Antiquary* and *The Bride of Lammermoor* are more interesting examples. The lack of any use of feminine discourse here is I think due to the fact that they are much more closely related to Scott's role as antiquarian rather than his role as novelist. *The Bride of Lammermoor* is much more of a ballad in prose than it is a novel, and its novelistic precedents are gothic rather than domestic. I say this, despite Hart's comment that this "Gothic classification tells us most about *The Bride of Lammermoor*'s unique fusion of domestic novel and historical romance" - for Hart here uses "domestic" to name those novels that use houses as central symbols (Hart 308). *The Antiquary*'s rejection of the feminine is indeed one of its themes: why else is Jonathan Oldbuck a misogynist? His misogyny is indeed of a piece with his antiquarianism: "See this bundle of ballads, not one of them later than 1700, and some of them an hundred years older. I wheedled an old woman out of these, who loved them better than her psalm-book" (III.24.25-27).

that their publication one after the other is not usually seen as significant. Yet it seems to me that they are linked; that they do indeed "form a couple analogous to 'Guy Mannering' and 'Waverley'";³⁷ that *Redgauntlet* is an answer to a problem posed by *Saint Ronan's Well*, in a way that only becomes apparent if we see them in the context of all Scott's realist fiction up to that point; to a problem posed, indeed, by all of Scott's realist fiction up to that point: namely the place of linguistic creativity in social-realist fiction.

As I say, it might appear at first as if this negotiation with the domestic novel is only necessary at the start of Scott's career as a novelist, and that once social realism is established as a genre, he no longer has to define his own texts in this way. Creative female dialogue of the sort we discovered in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* is indeed conspicuous by its absence in the novels I examine in Part Two, *Rob Roy*, *The Monastery* and *Saint Ronan's Well*. However, the *relation* between the two types of discourses still shapes their respective plots: all embody in objects or localities either social-realist discourse, or feminine discourse, or both, and then include these objects or localities as agents within the action: in other words, such discourse is included in the text as a signified rather than a signifier. These novels are allegories, not of history (as the endings of *Waverley* and *The Heart of Midlothian* are usually supposed to be) but of the relation between feminine discourse

And of course *The Antiquary* is notoriously plotless, as Scott admits in the Advertisement quoted from above.

³⁷ Pope-Hennessy, "The Dates of the Waverley Novels."

and social-realist discourse as it has been worked out in the earlier novels. In *Rob Roy* and *The Monastery*, such allegorization happens instead of any juxtaposition of the discourses themselves; *Saint Ronan's Well* retains this allegorical element despite being a nominally domestic novel, for despite being a domestic novel, Clara Mowbray is still very much alone.

And Clara Mowbray dies because of it. *Saint Ronan's Well* dramatizes its own failure to be the sort of novel it sets out to be, for a domestic novel ought to end with the heroine rewarded with a happy marriage. To effect a more positive renegotiation of his fiction with the domestic novel Scott is forced, after *Saint Ronan's Well*, to revert to a narrative pattern developed in an earlier novel, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and to find an alternative guarantor of a happy ending, an alternative agent of feminine discourse to the folk-figures of the first novels. Feminine creative dialogue is fully restored in the novel that resulted, *Redgauntlet*, with the peculiar alterations that its speakers are young men, and that it is the British State itself which assumes the feminine role of ensuring their safe deliverance to domesticity. In the conclusion I return to the question of the novel as discourse to consider the implications of this for our understanding of social realism as a genre, and in particular the place of its reader.

References

The Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels was just beginning to appear as this thesis was being written. Chapter, page and line references to *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf*, *Old Mortality* and *Saint Ronan's Well* only are to this edition. For all the others, I give volume, chapter and page references to the first edition, silently corrected where necessary. Where an edition in the Oxford World Classics series is available (*Waverley*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Redgauntlet*) I also give chapter and page references to this. References to the Magnum Opus footnotes etc. are to the Border Edition, ed. Andrew Lang.

Stories

I assume a thorough knowledge of *Waverley*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Redgauntlet*. The other novels that I examine are, I realize, much less often read: since my argument centres on plot structure, I start my discussion of these with an outline of the stories that they tell.

Part One

*The Return of Feminine Discourse
in Scott's First Novels*

Chapter 1

Waverley and Domestic Fiction

(i) Genre and the position of the reader

The opening chapters of *Waverley* present the background to and immediate reasons for the hero's joining the army and travelling to Scotland just before the outbreak of the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. Chapter I begins, however, with an attempt by the narrator to place his novel in relation to the various genres available to him, gothic, sentimental, fashionable and so on, in the absence of any of the usual subtitles on the title-page, such as "A Romance from the German" or "A Sentimental Tale." The value (and, for the author attempting to break free from them, the danger) of such genre markers, says the narrator, is the advance indication that they offer the reader of the nature of the plot, characters and *mise en scène* that are to constitute the text. Such a subtitle "may be held as pledging the author to some special mode of laying his scene, drawing his characters, and managing his adventures" (I.i.4; i.3). "Or again, if my *Waverley* had been entitled 'A Tale of the Times,' wouldst thou not, gentle reader, have demanded from me a dashing sketch of the

fashionable world. . . ?" (I.i.6; i.4).¹ These subtitles are there to form the reader's narrative expectations, but in doing so they constitute a contract between author and reader: a pledge on the part of the author, on the basis of which the reader is entitled to demand a certain return. In doing this, of course, such subtitles presuppose a pre-existing reader of a particular type, one already competent in the code of such subtitles, capable of deciphering their promise for the text. A generic self-definition of this sort, then, posits a reader with respect to whose literary competence the text is shaped. These generic markers thus place the text within what is essentially an intersubjective dialogue, and present the internal organization of the text (plot, character, etc.) as a performative use of language to be understood in the context of that dialogue.

The narrator then makes three moves in relation to this list of genres which are not to be used. First, he coyly implies that this negative catalogue has itself been an exercise in the manipulation of the reader, a second-order incitement, not of expectations, but of curiosity. ". . . I scorn to tyrannize longer over the impatience of my reader, who is doubtless already anxious to know the choice made by an author so profoundly versed in the different branches of his art" (I.i.7; i.4). It is implied that he will soon reveal his choice, and that the reader will therefore be able to form expectations of the nature of the

¹ See P. D. Garside, "Popular Fiction and National Tale: Hidden Origins of Scott's *Waverley*," *Nineteenth Century Literature* 46(1): 30-53 (1991) for the literary reality of the genres Scott refers to here.

text to come. Instead, he then subsumes all the genres hitherto mentioned under the name "Tales of Manners," and reduces the contrastive list to two categories, organized not according to similar reader expectations in plot or characterization, but according to their various sources of "interest." "A tale of manners, to be interesting, must either refer to antiquity so great as to have become venerable, or it must bear a vivid reflection of those scenes which are passing daily before our eyes, and are interesting from their novelty." Hence, instead of a genre-specific subtitle, a date, and a date which places *Waverley* in a temporal and hence generic neither-nor relationship with the two options described. But note that we have moved in the process from an understanding of genre as intersubjective contract to an understanding of genre as a function of the reality to which it refers. The nature of the world referred to by the text is no longer determined by the genre to which it allots itself, as was implied at I.i.5 (i.3): "... must not every novel-reader have anticipated ... some aged butler or housekeeper, whose trembling steps, *about the middle of the second volume*, were doomed to guide the hero ..." (my italics). Instead, a pre-existing feature of the world, namely its particular cultural forms in different ages, is understood as determining the genre. This second move prepares the way for the third. *Waverley*, the narrator explains, will gain its interest not from the differences which history generates, those particulars which the novel of manners delights in, but from history's universals, that which remains "common to men in all stages of society" (I.i.9-10; i.5).

"It is from the great book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions, whether of black letter or wire-wove and hot-pressed, that I have venturously essayed to read a chapter to the public" (I.i.11; i.5). Having established that genres, in the case of the novel of manners, are produced by extra-textual differences in the world, this novel is presented as one that transcends genre by setting forth the samenesses of the world.

"I scorn to tyrannize longer over the impatience of my reader. . ." But of course he continues to do so for another four chapters at least, before Edward Waverley's journey begins, chapters "a good deal censured as tedious and unnecessary" as Scott comments in the 1829 footnotes.² I.v ends, indeed, with a warning that the "dulness" may continue for some time, and a plea to his readers for "patience" (I.v.72,73; v.24).³

"By fixing then the date of my story Sixty Years before this present 1st November, 1805, I would have my readers understand that they will meet in the following pages neither a romance of chivalry, nor a tale of modern manners . . ." (I.i.7; i.4). Understand, that is, something about the inter-generic position of the novel. But by expressing that date as "Sixty Years Since" he

² *The Waverley Novels* in 48 Vols (The Border Edition) with Introductory Essay and Notes by Andrew Lang (London: John C. Nimmo, 1892-4) volume I (1892), v.43 (reprinted in Oxford World Classics edition, p.390).

³ Indeed, as Iser points out, a narrative technique like that of *Waverley*, one which builds up a mass of historical detail as seen from a variety of perspectives, demands the reader's patience for the entire length of the novel. See *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974) 98-99.

seems unwilling to have the reader understand that it refers to the memorable year 1745. Clarifying the novel's generic position here has the opposite of the predicted effect: it distracts us from the question of what the reader is to expect of the story's content (its reference in the world) rather than settling it. What seems to be a diffusion of information is in fact a withholding of information. This is a move at the level of the signifier: "Sixty years since" and "1745" here refer to the same extra-textual signified. So although in moving from the genres of the catalogue to the two types of novels of manners we have moved from distinction by generic expectation to distinction by object of reference, the text has not become transparent, and the position of the reader has not disappeared. The new, cognitive claim being made for the novel here has however reduced the reader from party to a contract with the author to assimilator of information, the recipient of a text to which there can be no reply.

The text thus understood as a cognitive structure has striking similarities to *discourse* as understood by Michel Foucault. Scott, of course, makes no explicit distinction, as Foucault does, between "things" as the pre-discursive ground of knowledge and the "objects" constituted in discourse according to its own rules as objects of knowledge.⁴ Nevertheless, Scott's text identifies itself here as something very like the cognitive structure that Foucault calls a discourse: a particular type of language used to constitute a field of knowledge. Just as Scott

⁴ See Michel Foucault, *The Archeology of Knowledge* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1972) 43 and 47-8.

proceeds, from re-defining the distinction between genres in terms of the historical manners they describe, to describing his particular task in terms of his particular chosen period, so discursive formations (and thus the fields of objects that they constitute) are defined by their interrelationship, by the way in which they divide up the world of things (in Scott's case, historical time) into fields of knowledge (here, historical periods):

Discursive relations are not . . . internal to discourse; they do not connect concepts or words to one another; they do not establish a deductive or rhetorical structure between propositions or sentences. Yet they are not relations exterior to discourse, relations that might limit it, or impose certain forms upon it, or force it, in certain circumstances, to state certain things. They are, in a sense, at the limit of discourse: they offer it objects of which it can speak, or rather (for this image of offering presupposes that objects are formed independently of discourse), they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc. These relations characterize not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice.⁵

This mutual constitution of discourses is what Foucault calls their "exteriority."⁶ Further, as is evident from the way in which discourse is defined above as a practice, the *performative* aspect of any utterance (such as a novel) resides (in large measure) in the way in which it alters these inter-discursive boundaries. This is possible because the rules constituted by discourse do not dictate which of all the utterances that they allow are actually

⁵ Foucault 46. Of course a genre does not constitute a discourse in Foucault's sense: the whole point about this term is that it allows us to group utterances in ways that cut across such traditional distinctions. I shall expand on this idea later in this chapter and in the next.

⁶ Foucault 121. This is not to go back on the denial in the second sentence quoted above: discourses are not defined by "relations exterior to discourse," that is, to discourse *in general*: their mutual relation is, however, exterior to each discourse taken individually.

made. Thus, those statements which *are* made have a performative impact on the mutual definition of discourses, distinct from the descriptive role they have by virtue of the place within their respective discourses.

In order to account for the choices that were made out of all those that could have been made (and those alone), one must describe the specific authorities that guided one's choice. Well to the fore is the role played by the discourse being studied in relation to those that are contemporary with it or related to it. One must study the *economy of the discursive constellation* to which it belongs.⁷

Such choices thus constitute what Foucault calls "strategies." "Strategy" is the category which allows Foucault to isolate an utterance's performative force in its effects on the external relations of the discourse to which it belongs; the internal organization of an utterance taken in isolation is already determined by the cognitive function it has within that discourse. A text's place in history seems to be independent of anything we can say about the text itself. Its appearance constitutes a discursive event, but nothing happens within the text that makes this appearance: its content is purely cognitive, empty of any performative force.

It is here that the comparison with Scott's description of his novel in *Waverley* becomes really interesting. There is an obvious congruence between discourse thus described and the social-realist novel. The latter, too, sets itself up as a way of *knowing* something, however much the appearance of one or another particular novel might have consequences in the society

⁷ Foucault 67.

that reads it. Further, the effect of placing the performative force of an utterance in its effects on discursive relations is to erase altogether the role of a particular readership in shaping the text. The third term in Foucault's definition of discourse (after the object and the strategy) is the "enunciative modality," comprising the status, as an individual and as the member of an institution, of the speaker, and the speaker's relation to the objects of the discourse as that is constituted by the discourse itself. "The positions of the subject are also defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or groups of objects."⁸ The only role left for the addressee in this is to share the status of the speaker, to adopt the subject position left for them by the discourse. The utterance is not, for Foucault, an *intersubjective* performance, but an interdiscursive one. The relation to other discourses of the discourse in which one speaks takes the place of the reader as the other with respect to which the utterance is shaped.⁹ Thus Scott's second move with respect

⁸ Foucault 52.

⁹ It is interesting to consider Ina Ferris's *The Achievement of Literary Authority* in this regard. She indeed admits that *Waverley* itself "appeals to a variety of implied readers . . . the narrator posits a whole range of narrator-narratee relationships in the various modes of address scattered throughout the narrative" (99), suggesting the heterogeneity at work within the novel on which I am going to focus; she also rightly points to the perception of the periodical reviewers of "a huge, recent increase in readers" (22) and that "the reading public" had become "a shifting and elusive mass" which did not "represent the commonality and consensus (the clubbiness) that the liberal public sphere ideally embodied" (23). This latter perception is one which I think Scott shared, and I hope to show how it helps explain the above-noted heterogeneity in Scott's texts. What Ferris fails convincingly to do in her book is provide some such way of connecting the novel-reviewing practices of the magazines (whose gender politics she brilliantly dissects) with the content or internal structure of the *Waverley* Novels whose reputation they established. Ferris's debt to Foucault is nowhere more apparent than in the assumption she makes, in Part One of her book, that the meaning of the *Waverley* Novels lies in their effects on the distribution of authority within the

to his initial list of genres, his reduction of the reader's role from party to an intersubjective contract to silent recipient of knowledge, brings his own understanding of his text very close to Foucault's understanding of discourse. However, Scott goes one step further:

"It is from the great book of Nature, the same through a thousand editions . . . that I have venturously essayed to read a chapter to the public." And "Nature" is a source that cannot be used to delimit a genre because of its pre-generic uniformity, its constitutive blankness. Scott here seems to move his novel away from Foucauldian "discourse" as I understand it, by giving it a cognitive function which is not limited by the abutting claims of other discourses. At the same time, however, that conjunction of author and reader in a common "subject position" with respect to the content of the discourse is reinforced by describing the

various discourses that constitute the literary field, the way in which they changed the status of novel and review alike; but, so long as gender is central to her argument, it is not clear what role readings of individual novels might have in this analysis. She thus shares with a much older generation of critics what F. R. Hart calls "the habit of confusing Scott the writer of fiction with Scott the cultural force" (Hart 5). Ferris's approach tells us a lot about how critical discourse shaped the impact of the *Waverley* Novels, but generally fails to describe how that discourse might have had a hand in shaping the novels in the first place. (Only *Waverley* is discussed as including within itself the gender-politics of the reviews, and *Waverley* is perhaps an exceptional case: see my analysis later in this chapter.) For all her awareness of the contemporary fragmentation of the literary readership, Ferris tends to construct the periodical reviewers as an ideal readership for the *Waverley* Novels, a readership whose reactions the novels anticipate and who thus have a shaping influence on the novels themselves. I, on the other hand, take the very shapelessness of the novel-reading public, the shapelessness that itself called the reviews into being (see Ferris, *Achievement* 23), as the addressee of Scott's fiction. In this context, it will be seen that the example of other novelists, female novelists, has a much more important role to play than their male reviewers in shaping Scott's text.

author, too, as a reader. The author becomes no more than a reader; the generically-defined reader, with respect to whose expectations the author might have to shape his text, is displaced by a blank, undifferentiated "public". These two displacements bear the same implication, however: that this text has no performative force whatsoever, even that left at the margins of discourse by Foucault. Scott here claims for his fiction the status of a purely cognitive text.

The eighteenth-century generalism implicit in this last stage of Scott's revision of his relation to his reader is of course explicitly abandoned at the end of the novel for historical particularism. There, *Waverley* is claimed to have been written "for the purpose of preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which I have witnessed the almost total extinction" (III.xxv.367; lxxii.340), in other words, as a novel of manners such as was described in the second stage of chapter I, a cognitive structure definable generically in terms of the material to which it refers. Now, it might be said by way of explaining this contradiction that the initial appeal to Nature in chapter I was a mistake. Scott wrote the first seven chapters of *Waverley* a decade before the rest, and perhaps he began by wanting to write a Fieldingesque satire, only to change his mind by the time he began I.viii. However, the author has already contradicted himself by the end of I.v: "My plan requires that I should explain the motives on which [the story's] action proceeded; and these motives necessarily arose from the feelings, prejudices, and parties of the times" (I.v.72; v.24).

An alternative explanation of this curious inscription and subsequent erasure of "Nature" comes in an article by Ina Ferris. Ferris suggests that the metaphor of the book of nature is made meaningful by Scott's alteration of the version he inherits from Fielding, and thereby implies that apart from this change it constitutes no more than a conventional gesture. "The shift from copying to reading involves a subtle but significant shift from mimesis to repetition."¹⁰ But both the historically general and the historically particular can form the *content* of mimesis *and* repetition. Ferris's explanation misses the place of Scott's use of the commonplace in an attempt to place his text generically, and in that attempt, as we have seen, the position of the reader is crucially at stake.

The second volume of *Waverley* begins by once more depicting the narrator as a reader, but this time not the reader of a universal book of Nature, but of historically particular documents:

Shall this be a short or a long chapter? -- This is a question in which you, gentle reader, have no vote, however much you may be interested in the consequences; just as probably you may (like myself) have nothing to do with the imposing a new tax, excepting the trifling circumstance of being obliged to pay it. More happy surely in the present case, since, though it lies within my arbitrary power to extend my materials as I think proper, I cannot call you into Exchequer if you do not think proper to read my narrative. Let me therefore consider. It is true, that the annals and documents in my hands say but little of this Highland chase . . . (II.i.3-4; xxiv.115)

This appeal to documentary sources is of course very characteristic of Scott and has provoked considerable criticism.

¹⁰ Ina Ferris, "Story-Telling" 31.

The intended effect is obviously to bolster the cognitive authority of the narrative, even while, as Ferris notes, fragmenting any artistic unity that a novel might lay claim to in the tacit admission that the truth of the text lies elsewhere, requires supplementation, is never final.¹¹ But the historical particularity of the documents referred to allows Ferris to perceive in such appeals a reinscription by Scott of a performative aspect to his project. Scott's defence of his novels as thus historically accurate, while admitting their formal, aesthetic imperfection, implies that "his narratives derive their value from their status not as artifacts but as acts of transmission. And so to see the novel is to displace the novelist from originator to transmitter in a line of transmitters";¹² in so doing Scott "brings to the bookish, middle-class genre of the novel an older sense of the role of narrative."¹³ This is the role that it has above all in an oral culture.

In the passage from the novel quoted above, however, the appeal to other written sources is at the same time an appeal to the breakdown of anything like a social contract between author and reader. Oral storytelling is distinguished if by nothing else then by the physical intimacy of narrator and audience. The novel on the other hand is ignorant of its reader.

¹¹ "The tangled story of the manuscript [in the Introduction to *The Monastery*] draws attention to transmission as a sliding from sign to sign, and such sliding threatens the stability of truth . . . Scott's belief in the cognitive power of fiction was hardly firm, and his documentation, one suspects, represents in but another form the same attraction to the transitory and the fragmentary that marks his storytelling . . . Scott's documentary impulse works also to blur the boundary of any particular text by linking it directly to other texts, to Scott's own voice, to the recollections of other voices, to old songs and tales" (Ferris, "Story-Telling" 29).

¹² Ferris, "Story-Telling" 28-29.

¹³ Ferris, "Story-Telling" 27.

The storyteller takes what he tells from experience -- his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale. The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is himself uncounselled, and cannot counsel others. To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life.¹⁴

The "transmission" in question can therefore hardly be that of the oral culture which Benjamin describes, and to which Ferris resorts as a model for incompleteness in Scott.

Seen alongside the opening paragraph of volume II, the shift from Scott's second definition of his novel (in terms of the historical period it represents) to his third (in terms of its repetition of a "great book of Nature") appears in a rather different light. Instead of constituting the sacrifice of a particular sort of reader for the sake of a general truth which the novel is to represent, it now seems rather obliged to re-image the object of representation as a book, readable by both author and reader, because of the loss of a particularized reader that follows from the nature of the novel form itself. Jon Klancher in a recent study notes how "[t]he English Romantics were the first to become radically uncertain of their readers" and certainly had "no single, unified 'reading public'" to address.¹⁵ Klancher discusses how the

¹⁴ Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller" in *Illuminations* trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Fontana, 1973) 87.

¹⁵ Jon Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences 1790-1832* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987) 3. To talk, as Jane Millgate does, of a "dialogue Scott was conducting with himself and with his first readers about the conventions of the new fictional subgenre he was in the process of creating" (Millgate ix) seems to me to be only half right, unless one takes these first readers to be the particular individuals Scott was in communication with at the time. In any case, as I am going to argue here, a much more important dialogue for Scott's novels was the one he conducted with his no-readers, with their very indeterminacy.

writers of all sorts of prose from periodical articles to theories of poetry tried to shape an audience for themselves, and contrasts their efforts with those who benefited from the change:

The phenomenon of the *unsought* mass audience . . . first appeared in the early nineteenth century: Lord Byron and Walter Scott awakened to something hardly imaginable to the writers who thought and wrote in terms of a deliberately formed compact between writer and audience.¹⁶

Waverley does not abandon the reader with her expectations and demands: that reader as an immanent reality has already gone, lost in the new, anonymous, fragmented literary audience.

In other words, the appeal to a text prior to the text in *Waverley*, whether to a "book of Nature" or to documentary sources, is not so much a return by Scott to the direct communication of an older, pre-literate, narrative situation, as an attempt to find some compensation for the loss of that situation. It is precisely the breakdown of reader-author expectations which generates the need to claim a prior text from which the present text draws its authority. If the author of the *Waverley* Novels positions himself as a transmitter rather than an originator, this position remains crucially different from that of his oral predecessors. What is transmitted in storytelling according to Benjamin is an "experience" or "counsel" which is in essence personal, and produced with the aim of making it common to those particular individuals then present. What is transmitted in the *Waverley* Novels is historical *knowledge*, whose validity, whose "truth," is independent of both author and

¹⁶ Klancher 172.

reader. Only *knowledge* requires documentary evidence as validation; requires, perhaps, beyond the historically particular, a pre-textual text, a book of Nature, to guarantee its authenticity.¹⁷

Thus the problems involved in the third step in Scott's definition of his novel obliges us to re-examine some of the equations made in our discussion of the second. There it was suggested that the new cognitive claims being made for *Waverley* were responsible for limiting the role of the reader to that of anonymous assimilator of knowledge. Now it seems that it is the loss of any particularized readership that demands a replacement as the text's validating other in the form of a knowable universe shared, by definition, with all possible readers. The text is no longer shaped with regard to its audience; instead, it is a

¹⁷ In addition to Ferris, Simon Edwards and Marilyn Orr have produced similar readings of the *Waverley* Novels as dialogues between oral culture and the novel: Edwards defining the novel in terms of the demands of the market ("Producing Voices: The Discursive Art of Walter Scott" in Parkinson, ed., *Peasants and Countrymen in Literature* [Roehampton: English Department of the Roehampton Institute of Higher Education, 1982] 123-54), Orr in terms of the obligation of the writer to impose order on his material in the form of a plot ("Voices and Text: Scott the Storyteller, Scott the Novelist" *S.L.J.* 16.2 [1989]: 41-59). All three critics tend to adopt the same privileging of oral over print culture that they find in Scott. Orr and Ferris both lay out the same basic argument. Both see the appeal to extra-novelistic sources as a distribution of authority away from the author and his novel to the traditions or processes of transmission to be found in oral culture; they then suggest that such an appeal by itself, whether to oral sources or to written documents, places the novel in just such a process of transmission, and makes it a continuation of oral tradition by other means. On the contrary, I see the meaning of such appeals as determined by their situation in the novel rather than vice versa: these novels are constructed as ways of knowing as oral narratives are not, and what they claim to know is very often oral culture itself, as we shall see in the following chapters. My difference from both Orr and Ferris might be summarized thus: where they see the *Waverley* Novels as the utilization of the novel form to perpetuate the virtues of oral culture, I see them as the utilization of oral culture to help create a new form of novel, that which will come to be called the social-realist novel: a new form of novel called into existence not by the need to preserve the old, but by the anonymity and social diversity of a newly increased readership.

cognitive structure constructed by the author from pre-existing materials. This leaves us with the question of what other effects the replacement of the reader with realism might have on the text. We will find that Scott's realist project does indeed place his novels within a cognitive discourse, taking that word as used by Foucault and already discussed. But we will also find that these novels remain marked by the loss of an intersubjective context in other ways, ways which will ultimately call into question the Foucauldian conception of discourse with which we began.

(ii) The novel as cognitive structure

Chapter I of *Waverley* thus anticipates two related innovations that are to be made in the following novel: the rejection of established genres and their established types of reader, and the replacement of any specific type of reader as its shaping other with the real world which it is going to describe. We must now explore how these promises relate to what actually happens in the text. Let us take them in reverse order.

What might it mean to say that *Waverley* deploys a cognitive structure? How, in other words, does it construct for us the real events of the Jacobite rising of 1745-6? Part of the answer must be in terms of Scott's understanding of historical change in general, and with particular reference to Scottish "speculative" or "philosophical" history of the eighteenth century. Scott's debt to the philosophical historians has been widely

documented and discussed, and I do not intend to add much to that discussion here.¹⁸ It must suffice for the moment to note their basic thesis, namely, that society evolves, bringing different political and cultural forms into existence as it does so, through stages defined by its principal means of providing for itself: from a tribal stage generated by a hunter-gatherer or stock-raising mode of subsistence, to a feudal stage with the introduction of agriculture, to a commercial stage with the rise of industry and commerce, for example. Those of the *Waverley* Novels set in late seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Scotland can be seen as exploring at the level of individual human experience the shift from the feudal (or, in the Highlands, quasi-tribal) society of the old Stuart Scotland to the new commercial Scotland of the Hanoverians; from the religious fundamentalism bred by the old society (again, for example) to the moderation and toleration of the new bourgeois order. Enlightenment theory thus provides

¹⁸ See, for the basic connections, Duncan Forbes, "The Rationalism of Sir Walter Scott," *Cambridge Journal* 7 (1953): 20-35; then P. D Garside, "Scott and the Philosophical Historians," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 36.3 (1975): 497-512 for the sources of this influence in Scott's education and reading; then, for more detailed discussion, David Brown, *Walter Scott and the Historical Imagination* (London: R.K.P., 1979) chapter 10; Graham McMaster, *Scott and Society* (Cambridge: C.U.P. 1981) chapter 2; and, with particular reference to *Waverley*, Avrom Fleishman, *The English Historical Novel* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1971) 37-46. One of the great advantages of Foucault's conception of "discourse" is that it allows us to group texts in ways that cut across traditional divisions such as those between literature and philosophy, and between historical texts and fictional ones. Foucault thus permits us to understand the texts of the philosophical historians and the *Waverley* Novels as constructing, within their common discourse, a common object of knowledge, namely society in its historical contingency. This permission has for a long time been taken for granted by the critics cited above, however. To describe Scott's texts as a cognitive discourse is in this respect to give a new name to a very unoriginal observation. The advantages of this renaming within Foucault's theory come when discussing the relation of this discourse to *other* discourses, as we will shortly do.

Scott with a model, an outline narrative, of social change on which he can build his own novelistic narrative: the object of Scott's cognitive discourse is already a narrative. As we will see in the next chapter, enlightenment theory also provides a model for understanding the class structure of a society at a particular stage in its development.

Another part of the answer to the question of how *Waverley* presents its historical object must be in terms of what Foucault calls the subject position available to the reader, which in the case of fiction can (for our present purposes at least) be equated with what is more conventionally referred to as narrative point of view. The central perspective that the reader gets on the events of the novel is that of its hero, Edward Waverley. His adventures are the ones that the narrator follows; his perspective on events is the one that the reader is invited both to share and to criticize. The first part of his function as thus described, his role as point of view on reality as such, is one that he has in common with most of the heroes of the Scottish novels, and accounts in part for their often-noted "passive" part in the story itself: only by being shunted about the scene of historical action by forces outside their control can they see it in a sufficient number of aspects to give the reader a general understanding of what is going on. Indeed the historiographical and perspectival aspects of *Waverley* are related, since the presupposition behind philosophical history is that historical change is produced by a complex of impersonal (at root, economic) forces, and not by the intentions of particular

individuals. Thus to let us understand the real historical significance of the events of 1745-6, it is not sufficient that Waverley follow Charles Stuart's army from its formation to its defeat at Culloden. He must also encounter the various religious and political loyalties of eighteenth-century Scotland, see for himself the economic situation of both Highland and Lowland society at the time, and so on.

The extent and manner in which the reader is invited to criticize Waverley's *interpretation* of what he sees has raised some critical discord. It will already be obvious that I am in essential agreement with Wolfgang Iser when he writes:

Scott's conception of reality . . . no longer serves to illustrate moral norms [as in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding] but, instead, is taken as an end in itself. It can only be successfully disclosed through the 'wandering viewpoint' of the reader . . . because it is no longer possible to find a single, ideal position that will command a total panorama. Thus Scott warns his readers that they will have to be patient . . .¹⁹

On this reading (and I take it that Iser's essay *is* a reading, and not, as he seems to imagine, a phenomenological description of the conditions of any particular reading) the realistic innovation of *Waverley* might seem to lie in its representation of the world prior to any moral or philosophical judgement of it (in other words, before any particular reading of it: what *Waverley* does to the world according to Iser sounds very like what Iser says he is doing to *Waverley*). As Iser goes on to describe it, what we are in fact offered is a variety of moral, philosophical or political viewpoints, none of them given privileged status within the text.

¹⁹ Iser 87.

The reader is then left to actively construct a real world that exists independently from all these by extracting what they have in common, by performing an *époché* with regard to them.

By fanning out the character into a series of perspectives, Scott creates a heightened awareness of *potential* character. The way is open for the imagination to penetrate the diversification and to bind the various aspects together in a unified picture . . .²⁰

Iser's argument depends on two doubtful propositions. The first is that the reader will be able to find enough in common between the various perspectives on offer to construct the real world, and that none of them are irresolvably contradictory. The second is that the text has no favourites among them, does not distinguish between them from its own moral perspective. Only thus can the novel construct a reality which is "a subject in itself" and not "only a testing ground for a philosophical idea."²¹

Yet by far the most obvious reading of *Waverley* is as a *Bildungsroman*, a novel in which the hero's education consists precisely in learning to distinguish true perspectives on the world from false or distorted ones. *Waverley* himself is a reader, one who brings the interpretive expectations of romance to the real world and must come to replace them with other, better ones: those, apparently, of history; those, in fact, of the historical novel.

²⁰ Iser 99. This need for active construction by the reader has been similarly linked to the cognitive claims of the Scottish novels, but in the context of English Romanticism, by Frank Jordan in "Scott and Wordsworth; or, Reading Scott Well," *Wordsworth Circle* 4.2 (spring 1973): 112-23.

²¹ Iser 88.

. . . he felt himself entitled to say firmly, though perhaps with a sigh, that the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced. (III.xiii.179-80; lx.283)

To read the novel thus is to identify the realism of this novel, its distinguishing cognitive status, as one perspective on the world among others, instead of a higher perspective capable of representing a variety of possible perspectives in their various relations to the real world. It is to give *Waverley* a didactic purpose, a moral, just what Iser sees its realism as rising above. It is to make *Waverley* more of an eighteenth-century novel than the proto-nineteenth-century novel that Iser sees it as.

The uncertainties of the reading process are analogous to those of the political process, a disturbing state of affairs to which the novel as a whole looks back from its safer, calmer modern vantage point. . . . flexible reader response is one aspect of a general uncertainty we are encouraged to feel well rid of . . .

The importance and extent of this consensus is most apparent at the end of the novel . . . Scott uses his endings to make points, impart morals, and solidify his own attitude towards his materials. At the same time the character of these conclusions suggests something about the nature of the novels they belong to: the texts *can* be closed; there is a final, total perspective from which everything can be understood, one that works more successfully than any other; there is a last word, and it belongs to the author.²²

If we are to read *Waverley* as a *Bildungsroman*, then obviously the ending of the novel is going to have an important place in that reading, for the end must display the hero in the enlightened state that his progress through the story has granted him, and thus in part determine the meaning of all that has gone before. Whether that state can be simply equated with the privileged perspective of an author or narrator is a moot point,

²² R. L. Stein, "Historical Fiction and the Implied Reader: Scott and Iser," *Novel* 14.3 (1981): 224.

however.²³ Jane Millgate argues that the narrator's perspective itself is revealed as limited by the end of the novel, for Waverley grows in ways that the narrator himself does not fully grasp. She agrees with Stein that the narrator's point of view is essentially that of an eighteenth-century Fieldingesque satirist, but one whose ability to evaluate the events he narrates is undercut by his historical distance from them, by the fact that he is speaking from the nineteenth century. Where Waverley learns from his experiences, the narrator's mode of judgement remains the same throughout, and proves inadequate to understanding just what his hero has learned.²⁴ Given the absence of a first-person account of this process from Waverley himself, however, we are left with the question of how the text suggests the limitations of its own narrator's point of view.

Millgate's answer is in terms of the narrative structure of the novel as a whole. She points out the way in which the text is patterned by Waverley's three visits to Baron Bradwardine's home at Tully Veolan: the first as the Baron's guest, the second during his illness-come-imprisonment when neither he nor the reader knows where he actually is, and the third after the castle's sack by the government army while its master is in hiding. On his first visit he reads Tully Veolan entirely in terms of his own romantic preconceptions; on his last he is able to see the real values of the society on Bradwardine's estate. But it is the central

²³ In what follows I will be discussing the perspective of the narrator, not the author. To say that the "last word . . . belongs to the author" is to say nothing about how perspectives interrelate within the novel; it is simply to take the meaning generated by that interrelation and put the author's name to it.

²⁴ Millgate 36-39.

visit, or rather the revelation in III.xviii (lxv) to both reader and Waverley that this was a visit to Tully Veolan at all, that forces the reader to assemble the narrative of Edward's education in order to see this progress.

. . . the ironic contrast between Edward's former arrival as welcome guest . . . remains unexpressed, awaiting revelation and interpretation until Edward's next return. This delay not only maintains the reader's closeness to Edward in this central section of the narrative, thereby heightening the experience of confusion and alienation; it also requires that the narrative be decoded backwards as well as forwards once the revelation has been made. Mystery becomes a device for disrupting narrative sequence and obliging the reader to bring together all the Tully Veolan episodes for interpretation through superimposition.²⁵

These are demands made on the reader to which the narrator is oblivious: "These circumstances will serve to explain such points of our narrative as, according to the custom of story-tellers, we deemed it fit to leave unexplained, for the purpose of exciting the reader's curiosity" (III.xviii.263-4; lxv.309).

We seem able at this point to reach a provisional conclusion against Iser: Millgate shows how a particular perspective *is* given privileged status among those available in the text, not that of the author or narrator as Stein claims, but that of Waverley himself at the end of the story. *Waverley's* realism appears to rest less on its portrayal of real history, than on its hero's progress in learning to recognize "real history." If this is true, then we will be obliged to seriously moderate Scott's claim to have replaced the generically-defined reader with an objective reality as its constituting other. It seems that the main aim of *Waverley* is not to represent an object of public historical knowledge but to

²⁵ Millgate 44.



engage the reader with the education of its young hero. This inevitably involves an assumption of a particular type of reader, the type, namely, who might be, or might have been, prone to the same sort of mistakes himself.

Its status as *Bildungsroman* also explains the grave limitations of Edward Waverley as the reader's viewpoint on historical events. Edward does *not* follow the Jacobites to their defeat at Culloden. The course of historical events here, "perfectly adapted to a strong and simple and immensely venerable literary treatment,"²⁶ seems to provide him with an ending ready-made, yet he does not use it, choosing Waverley's renewed relations with Tully Veolan as a conclusion instead. Waverley is left behind by the rebel army in Cumbria, and is in London when he hears about its final destruction.

Nevertheless, there might be a sense in which the restoration of Tully Veolan to the Baron, and Waverley's marriage to his daughter, *both* rewards the hero of a *Bildungsroman* and is *also* itself a historical fiction. Scott the novelist is obliged to provide a narrative beginning, middle and end at the same time as Scott the historian presents actual events. The problem with historical process as the Enlightenment (and Scott) understood it is that it does not provide any endings at all. The theoretical historians and Scott were alike uneasy about reading into their narratives a teleology that made the creation of modern Britain

²⁶ A.O.J. Cockshut, *The Achievement of Walter Scott* (London: Collins, 1969) 107. Cockshut explains this omission in terms of the novel's underlying historiography: "[Scott] wished to show us the inherent collapse of the old Highland values, and not to derive the false impression that a mere military defeat was the cause" (115).

the purpose behind British history.²⁷ *Waverley* might seem at first sight an exception to this general rule. Robert C. Gordon questions Thomas Crawford's comment that Scott routinely "did what Hegel . . . was content merely to think",

but the nearest Scott came to asserting that pattern was in *Waverley*, where the present triumphs over the past, finally adapting some of its values (loyalty, for example) to its own purposes and preserving others as aesthetic images.²⁸

The suggestion is that Scott provides this novel with an ending by enacting a synthesis between the social forces that have clashed in civil war in the course of his story. But this is something he can only do at the level of his individual characters, and not at the level of society as a whole, for Culloden and its aftermath were of course not a synthesis of old and new but the destruction of the old by the new. Any reconciliation that may have been the upshot of 1746 took many years to achieve and could hardly be presented as a simple historical event within the timescale of this novel.

Most critics assume that *Waverley's* marriage to Rose symbolizes in some way some aspect of the historical process as well as having a meaning in the context of his own private development. When F. R. Hart, for example, says that Rose

²⁷ "Unlike the majority of nineteenth-century historians whom Herbert Butterworth criticized in *The Whig Interpretation of History*, Scott does not attempt to subordinate the past to the present, or seek to 'produce a story which is the ratification if not the subordination of the present'. When Scott does try to do this, as in the conclusion to *Old Mortality*, his characteristic historical realism is lost." Brown 203.

²⁸ Robert C. Gordon, *Under Which King?* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969) 65, referring to Thomas Crawford, *Walter Scott*. (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965) 48 (see the revised version of Crawford's book [Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1982] 52).

"stands for concrete human loyalties, as opposed to rigid ideal commitments" such as those represented by Flora MacIvor, there is no doubt that these "loyalties" are the product of a particular social system, the same "loyalty" as is referred to by Gordon in the passage quoted above, one that Waverley will play his part in preserving under the changed social circumstances of post-Culloden Britain. Rose may be the "private or personal counterpart" to the political Flora, but the private and the personal are given the meaning and value that they have by the political organization of the new Britain.²⁹

Thus the marriage, which at first sight might seem part of Waverley's personal story quite apart from the novel's historical content, can be seen instead to work within the cognitive function of the historical novel. The novel sets itself up as a means of knowing the social changes that happened in eighteenth-century Scotland: the marriage might symbolize those changes, where the bulk of the action describes them, but both marriage and historical action seem to fulfil a role in the novel's cognitive

²⁹ Hart 21. I discuss Hart's comments on the role of the domestic plot further at the end of the following chapter. Gordon is quite explicit about what the marriage symbolizes: "Edward not only marries the Baron's daughter, he also marries the estate, where he may breathe the air of the Highlands and participate in a life that preserves feudal virtues and pleasures without the physical and moral perils of feudal violence"; "... their marriage [that of the Scott hero and heroine in general] ... must symbolize a reconciliation between the opposing political currents that make the pageants of history so bloody" (Gordon 24; 60-61). Alexander Welsh is less so: "The proper heroine of Scott is a blonde ... She is eminently beautiful, and eminently prudent ... In the Waverley Novels the hero always knows his mind by the end. As the hero of civil society he chooses the blonde heroine of society"; and yet the value of prudence, and the very expression "civil society," makes Waverley's choice of bride as he describes it here the choice of the new social order (Alexander Welsh, *The Hero of the Waverley Novels, with new essays on Scott* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992] 48-9, 55).

project. George Levine notes how, although such an ending "softens" reality,

. . . As the tricks reemerge from the romancer's bag, . . . they begin to do the work of history itself. The tag, "they lived happily ever after," in Scott is likely to mean that the protagonist, having found the right side in large historical conflicts, is rewarded personally with the success of the winning party.³⁰

This makes the ending of *Waverley* what Tom Crawford calls "historical allegory."³¹ The switch to allegory would be made necessary by the fact that this is a novel, and as such requires an ending: that the marriage is a symbol of a historical fact makes it a proper ending to a historical novel.

On the one hand, then, we have Millgate's reading of *Waverley* as *Bildungsroman*, in which the marriage functions as the culmination of and reward for Waverley's growing understanding of himself and his world, and on the other, a reading in which Rose herself represents certain political values and her marriage to Waverley their historical triumph. The first implies a very active role for the reader, required to connect Waverley's marriage into Tully Veolan with his earlier visits there, especially the obscured one, and at the same time gives the novel something like a didactic relation to its implied reader; the second reading leaves the reader much closer to the passive assimilator of information that chapter I of this novel suggested was the reader's role in historical realism. What is striking about *both* these understandings of the novel's ending is that they

³⁰ Levine 92.

³¹ Crawford 99.

ignore Rose's own very active role in the story up to this point. In Waverley's second period at Tully Veolan she does not simply come along with the locality: *she* is the main object of Waverley's and the reader's frustrated curiosity, not the location of the hideout as Millgate seems to assume. Her intervention on Waverley's behalf, of which this is the culmination, defies interpretation as historical allegory, however, and so this reading of the marriage too passes over her agency and reduces her to a sign for a set of political values.

This activity on Rose's part contrasts sharply with Waverley's prevailing passivity, and its significance will need to be discussed if we want to understand the way in which her marriage to Waverley closes the story. Before we can do that, however, we must pursue further the question of genre raised by the term *Bildungsroman* and discuss the relation of *Waverley* to other types of prose fiction and their generically defined readerships.

(iii) *Waverley* and the romance reader

If *Waverley* is a *Bildungsroman*, it is one of a very specific sort. The mistakes that Waverley makes are the result of his ill-disciplined reading, and it is this emphasis on the bad effects of a certain sort of reading that connects *Waverley* to the *anti-romance*. This connection was first made by Robert A. Colby, who lists and describes some of the foremost examples of the genre,

from Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) to Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine; or, The Fair Romance Reader* (1813). These novels, he writes,

had in common a central character whom we might dub, after the best known of them, the "Fair Romance Reader." This heroine, intoxicated by escapist romantic literature of one sort or another, generally goes through a series of ludicrous adventures set off by her desire to imitate the careers of her fictitious models. Eventually she receives a rude awakening which clears her mind and adjusts it to the real world.³²

The type of heroine that Colby describes here is a fictional expansion of the figure of the female reader that Ferris describes as a trope at work in the periodical criticism of the same period, where female novel-reading is "a practice marked by passion, sentiment, and delusion."³³ The activity of novel-reading by a woman is described in the reviews in such terms as turn it into an erotic act:

It is not simply the romantic *content* of the ordinary novel that is seductive and inflaming; the act of reading itself becomes identified with pleasuring the body, even with the working of sexual desire.³⁴

Waverley's reading as an adolescent is discussed in chapter III of the novel. He grows up reading the medieval romancers and their Renaissance imitators: for him to be reading the ordinary novel of the late eighteenth century in the 1740s would be too obviously a historical anachronism. However, the narrator's vocabulary when he describes this early reading tends

³² Robert A. Colby, *Fiction With a Purpose: Major and Minor Nineteenth-Century Novels* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967) 45-6.

³³ Ferris, *Achievement* 35-6.

³⁴ Ferris, *Achievement* 40.

to reduce it to a sort of masturbation in exactly the same way as the periodical reviewers sensualized female reading:

Edward . . . read no volume a moment after it ceased to excite his curiosity or interest; and it necessarily happened, that the habit of seeking only this sort of gratification rendered it daily more difficult of attainment, till the passion for reading, like other strong appetites, produced by indulgence a sort of satiety. (I.iii.38; iii.13)

The language of chapter III is echoed at the end of chapter V. Here, at the end of those introductory chapters "a good deal censured as tedious and unnecessary," the narrator again contrasts the novel to come with an established genre, just as he had in chapter I: this time with the oriental fantastic tale of the *Thousand and One Nights*. This time, however, the reader is explicitly characterized as female, and this sort of fiction, read "merely for amusement" (I.v.71; v.24), as female reading matter. And the word "amusement" links this female reader with Waverley's own reading practice in chapter III. There he is described as seeking instruction "only . . . so long as it afforded him amusement" (I.iii.36; iii.13). Thus is Waverley's reading practice implicitly characterized as that of the female romance reader, whether we take that figure as the construction of the reviews (with Ferris) or of fictional anti-romance (with Colby).

However, Ferris and Colby each suggest limits to the observations of the other in ways that point to writing beyond the reviews or the anti-romance as narrowly defined. Ferris notes the distinction made by the periodicals between the Ordinary Novel, the contemporary material of the same corrupt female reading practices as Waverley adopts with regard to his

romances, and the Proper Novel, the morally edifying fiction written by women such as Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Jane Austen. *Waverley* can be seen to follow the reviews in its criticism of female reading, but Ferris nowhere hints at how it might be related to female writing, to what she calls the Proper Novel.³⁵ Similarly, Colby misses the extent to which the concern with the effects of bad female reading central to the anti-romance is also a characteristic theme of just these writers. It was not only the reviews that distinguished bad female reading from good female writing: the good female writers were anxious to distinguish themselves thus as well.

The most famous example of such self-distinction is probably the exaltation of Burney and Edgeworth in chapter V, and the implicit praise of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* in chapter VI, of *Northanger Abbey*. But *Northanger Abbey* is very much in the tradition of the anti-romance as Colby narrowly defines it. An example of the same concern for distance from the Ordinary Novel that suggests how it was included in the Proper Novel more generally might be picked instead from Maria Edgeworth's *Patronage*, a novel published in the same year as *Waverley*. Here the beautiful Miss Hauton, "a woman of fashion"³⁶ and the daughter of a *divorcée*, tries to flirt with the sensible Godfrey, eldest son of the novel's exemplary Percy family:

³⁵ An omission also made by Ian Duncan, when he, too, identifies *Waverley* with "the generic type of the eighteenth-century romance reader, the female quixote" (Duncan 63).

³⁶ Maria Edgeworth, *Patronage* (London: J. Johnson and Co., 1814) Liv.117.

. . . Godfrey, who had kept aloof, had in the mean time been looking at some books, that lay on a reading table. -- *Maria Hauton* was written in the first page of several of them. -- All were novels -- some French, and some German, of a sort which he did not like.

"What have you there, Mr. Percy?" said Miss Hauton. -- "Nothing worth your notice, I am afraid -- I dare say you do not like novels."

"Pardon me, I like some novels very much." --

"Which?" said Miss Hauton, rising and approaching the table.

"All that are just representations of life and manners, or of the human heart," said Godfrey, "provided they are . . ."

"Ah! the human heart!" interrupted Miss Hauton -- "The heart only can understand the heart -- who, in modern times can describe the human heart?"

"Not to speak of foreigners -- Miss Burney -- Mrs. Opie -- Mrs. Inchbald" -- said Godfrey.

"True -- and yet I . . . and yet . . ." said Miss Hauton, pausing, and sighing. --

"And yet that was not what I was thinking of" -- she should have said, had she finished her sentence with the truth; but this not being convenient, she left it unfinished, and began a new one, with -- "Some of these novels are sad trash -- I hope Mr. Godfrey Percy will not judge of my taste by them. That would be condemning me for the crimes of my bookseller, who will send us down every thing new that comes out."³⁷

Defining what we mean by the Proper Novel, or the Courtship Novel, or the Domestic Novel is thus easy, given such lists of authors within the novels themselves. Defining the genre is indeed much easier than choosing which of the available names to adopt for it.³⁸ It is the genre that Scott himself, as late as

³⁷ Edgeworth, *Patronage* I.v.146-8.

³⁸ Jane Spencer calls it the "didactic" or "conformist" tradition; Ferris, as already noted, uses the term "Proper Novel"; Katherine Sobba Green chooses "Courtship Novel"; and Nancy Armstrong adopts "Domestic Novel" (Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986]; Katherine Sobba Green, *The Courtship Novel 1740-1820: A Feminized Genre* [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991]; Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* [Oxford: O.U.P., 1987]). Of these alternatives, the second and last have the advantage of being in use at the time the novels were being written, and the third the advantage of naming what actually happens in their stories. The last two are unfortunately available for application to the very different sorts of fiction being written in the Victorian period, when I am concerned here with a genre relatively unmarked by later innovations, central among them those produced by Scott. I shall nevertheless use "domestic novel" for reasons which will become apparent very soon. I also have the partial authority of Scott himself: he uses the word "domestic" to define a genre in the Ashestiel fragment: ". . . it required the art of Burney, or the feeling of Mackenzie,

1832, defined broadly as "an imitation of the shifting manners of our own time"; he lists Burney, Edgeworth, Austen, Charlotte Smith and Susan Ferrier as the women "whose success seems to have appropriated this province of the novel as exclusively their own."³⁹ Five years earlier, in his essay on Charlotte Smith for *Ballantyne's Novelists Library*, these are the names mentioned alongside the female Gothics like Ann Radcliffe, Clara Reeve and Mary Shelley, and here he also includes Mrs Inchbald and Mrs Opie.⁴⁰ The realism of *Waverley* is often taken as an extension, a historicization, of Fielding's satire of manners. But in the half-century between Fielding and Scott another sort of fiction had risen to prominence which combined satire and realism: the sort of fiction written by the women listed above.

The possibility then arises that *Waverley* could be seen as an extension, a historicization, of *domestic* realism. The identification of *Waverley* as a male version of the fair romance reader suggests that his learning process in general might be a

to fix my attention upon a domestic tale" (J. G. Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 2nd edn., vol.1 [Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, and London: John Murray, 1839] 62). Burney, as will be clear from her inclusion in every list of domestic novels cited above, is the paradigm example of the domestic novelist; Mackenzie's sentimentalism rather than his maleness make him more difficult to place within the genre. Scott is talking about his adolescent reading in the mid-1780s, when Burney's work was only beginning to prove influential enough to warrant assigning her and her successors a genre of their own: "By the late 1780s, Fanny Burney was a standard against whom new women novelists were measured. Critics could now divide women novelists into two sorts, the writers of mere sentimental fiction and those like Burney and Smith, who could also encompass life and manners, wit and satire, without losing the morality and modesty required of women" (Spencer 97).

³⁹ Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang vol. XXXIII, Introduction xvii.

⁴⁰ Reprinted in Williams 190. Erasmus Darwin in 1797 similarly groups Burney, Brooke, Lennox, Inchbald and Charlotte Smith as "serious" novelists for the attention of young women. *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools* (Derby: J. Johnson, 1797) 33.

political version of the domestic heroine's progress towards the right marriage. Where the heroine of a novel by Burney or Austen learns to recognize true virtue in men and women and chooses a husband accordingly, *Waverley* comes to see the political reality of contemporary society and, in accordance with the symbolism of Rose noted above, chooses a wife accordingly. The education of the protagonist and its reward in marriage could thus be a structure taken over by *Waverley* from the domestic novel, replacing in doing so the domestic content of the protagonist's experiences with the historical content supplied by the Jacobite rebellion.

This might be a useful way of relating *Waverley* to the contemporary domestic novel if Scott's novel did not tend to include and juxtapose both the domestic and the political rather than replacing the one with the other. The separation of these two spheres and their gendering as female and male respectively was by Scott's time an established fact of the culture: what is more, it was partly produced, and partly made possible, by the rise of the domestic novel. Jane Spencer notes how, "at the same time as encouraging women to write, this feminization of literature defined literature as a special category supposedly outside the political arena . . .":⁴¹

. . . Writing, at the same time as it was being professionalized, was also being domesticated . . . The novel usually dealt with women's experience in a domestic setting . . . women were now seen as having a legitimate authority within the private sphere: including domestic life, emotions, romance, and the young girl's moral welfare.⁴²

⁴¹ Spencer xi.

⁴² Spencer 20-21.

In fact, in the early years of the nineteenth century, the meaning of the domestic was changing from that established by the eighteenth-century women novelists. In this regard it is instructive to return to *Patronage* and compare it with one of Edgeworth's earlier domestic novels, *Belinda* (1801). In the latter text, domesticity is not simply the female sphere but one of two alternatives within the world of an upper-class woman. *Belinda* argues for the home and the family as the morally nurturing place for a woman to live, in opposition to the "fashionable world" of loveless ostentation and feminine display. This is a lesson that its eponymous heroine learns fairly early on: the real conversion from the the ball to the hearth is of Lady Delacour.

"O, no," said lady Anne, "you must not give her up yet. I have been informed, upon *the best authority*, that lady Delacour was not always the unfeeling dissipated fine lady that she now appears to be. This is only one of the transformations of fashion -- the period of enchantment will soon be at an end, and she will return to her natural character . . . when she is tired of the insipid taste of other pleasures, she will have a higher relish for those of domestic life, which will be new and fresh to her."

"And so you really think, my dear lady Anne, that my lady Delacour will end by being a domestic woman . . ."43

In *Patronage*, in contrast, the domestic sphere is defined not in opposition to the world of fashion but to the world of politics. Lord Oldborough, a minister of state, remarks upon Mr. Percy's preference for the home over the chance of a political career:

. . . [H]e asked Mr. Percy some questions about his family, and turned the conversation again to domestic affairs; -- expressed surprise, that a man of Mr. Percy's talents should live in such absolute retirement, and seeming to forget what he had said himself but half an hour before, of the pains and

⁴³ Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (Oxford: O. U. P., 1994) viii.105.

dangers of ambition, and all that Mr. Percy had said of his love of domestic life, appeared to take it for granted, that Mr. Percy would be glad to shine in public, if opportunity were not wanting.⁴⁴

Note how the subject making this choice here is a man, not a woman. It is no surprise that the novel defines female virtue in terms of the home: "Count Altenberg, in common with every man of sense and knowledge of the world, knew that it is in her own family, in domestic life, he should judge a woman's real disposition and temper . . ."⁴⁵ More surprising is that male virtue should be defined in identical terms. Mrs. Hungerford announces the imminent arrival of her son, a colonel in the army, returning with commendations from his commander for gallantry in the field against the French, with the words: "I am proud that you, my friends, should see what a sensation the first sound of his return makes in his own *home*.-- There it is, after all, that you may best judge what a man really is."⁴⁶ This difference between *Belinda* and *Patronage* exemplifies perfectly Nancy Armstrong's observation that domestic virtue, although at first a uniquely feminine one, became in the early nineteenth century modern morality itself:

Men were no longer political creatures so much as they were the products of desire and producers of domestic life . . . the difference between male and female was understood in terms of their respective *qualities of mind* . . . that had formerly determined female nature alone.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Edgeworth, *Patronage* I.ii.41-2.

⁴⁵ Edgeworth, *Patronage* III.xxix.169.

⁴⁶ Edgeworth, *Patronage* II.xviii.111.

⁴⁷ Armstrong 4. Ian Duncan picks up this theme in *Modern Romance*, when he describes the new private subjectivity "spiritually grounded upon a domestic space set apart from public life, from politics, and . . . historical process" and "already available [to Scott] culturally, as a literary figure." But he then argues that its "strong version" (?) was available to

Edward Waverley is described by Flora in a strikingly similar way to Colonel Hungerford:

"... You seek ... a heart whose principal delight should be in augmenting your domestic felicity, and returning your affection, even to the height of romance ... you, Mr Waverley, would for ever refer to the idea of domestic happiness which your imagination is capable of painting ..." (II.iv.69-70; xxvii.135)

Later she compares him to her brother:

... She was by no means blind to his faults, which she considered as dangerous to the hopes of any woman, who should found her ideas of a happy marriage in the peaceful enjoyment of domestic society, and the exchange of mutual and engrossing affection. The real disposition of Waverley, on the other hand, notwithstanding his dreams of tented fields and military honour, seemed exclusively domestic. (III.v.67-8; lii.248)

His marriage to Rose and the nature of his settlement at Tully Veolan proves Flora's estimation of Waverley correct, as does Waverley's behaviour seen from other points of view, for example his mistaking white cockades for bridal favours (II.iii.49; xxvi.129). Rose is the domestic woman that makes possible a proper domestic settlement for the hero, just as Clarence Hervey or Lord Orville or Mr Knightley are domestic men that can provide a proper home for the heroine of a courtship novel. "Her very soul is in the home, and in the discharge of all those quiet virtues of which home is the centre," Flora observes to her brother. The governing opposition here is not between political

Scott through the Gothic romance; to me the domestic novel seems a much more immediate source, especially since Scott's "rewriting" of "the historical private subject as masculine in terms already feminine" was already begun, as the examples from *Patronage* above demonstrate, by the domestic novel itself rather than its Gothic rival.

realism and romantic fantasy, but between politics and domesticity, precisely that of *Patronage*. Rose thus appears *not* as the signifier of a particular set of political values, but as a signifier of the outside of politics, the rejection of politics, its constituting other.⁴⁸ The whole text of *Waverley* begins to look like the diversion of its hero from the sort of novel that is his proper home into an alien world of politics and military action; a diversion which is however necessary to teach him the true value of domesticity, the value that the heroine of a domestic novel learns from the equally dangerous world of balls, carriage-rides and Vauxhall Gardens.⁴⁹

This diversion into politics is however not the *whole* text of *Waverley*, for its appeal to the values of domesticity does not entirely bypass the type of novel that is their characteristic vehicle. The opposition of the political to the domestic is at work within the discourse of the novel itself. The final paragraph I.v begins with an apology for "plaguing" readers "so long with old-fashioned politics, and Whig and Tory, and Hanoverians and Jacobites." This is puzzling. It seems appropriate here only if it is read as pre-emptive, for there has been comparatively little about politics in the discourse of the novel up to this point: a paragraph on Richard Waverley's defection to the Whigs in I.ii (which is thereafter only concerned with the consequences on the

⁴⁸ This is not to deny Armstrong's point, that the separation of the domestic sphere from the political, as an area under an authority distinct from the political, was itself a political strategy. But I am dealing here with the consequences of that separation rather than its causes.

⁴⁹ David Brown has made this connection between the domesticity ascribed to *Waverley* and the domestic novel: "She [Flora] is quite right: *Waverley*'s future position is not that of the feudal aristocrat -- it is nearer to the way of life of Jane Austen's leisurely, upper-middle-class world" (Brown 22).

inheritance of Waverley-Honour); a reference to Edward's tutor's refusal to swear allegiance at the accession of George I in chapter I.iii; and one to Sir Everard's resignation of his seat in parliament at the same time in chapter I.iv. The bulk of the political content of the first five chapters in fact occurs in the fifth, but its function there is ambivalent. It presents the restrictions placed on the choices of the Waverley family by their High Tory past, restrictions which ultimately dictate that Edward joins the army, rather than takes the Grand Tour. But the necessity of Edward leaving Waverley-Honour at all is established by a woman, by his Aunt Rachel, and is dictated by very domestic considerations: Edward must not fall in love with Miss Cæcelia Stubbs. This is the first instance of female government in the novel, and it will recur repeatedly to shape its extra-historical action. It is also the first instance of female government gone wrong as the initiator of the main action in the Waverley Novels as a whole, a function that recurs in several other novels.

The style of the passages which bracket this intrusion of politics into domestic concerns is itself curious. The chapter begins by recounting that dreamy disposition of Edward's which has been the burden of the previous chapter, a point of view to which women are inevitably external and objects of fantasy. The narrative voice is itself marked as male at this point by some awkward generalizations about women: "Even the most simple and unsuspicious of the female sex have (God bless them!) an instinctive sharpness of perception in such matters . . ." (I.v.57; v.19). It then moves to the perspective of Aunt Rachel and Sir

Everard, and then into the political debate. But when we come to the last encounter between Edward and Miss Stubbs we have a paragraph which begins, "There is no better antidote against entertaining too high an opinion of others, than having an excellent one of ourselves at the very same time" (I.v.69; v.23). This sentence, even considered on its own, is distinctly generically marked. It is the ironic moral generalization of feminine domestic fiction. Nothing could be less like Scott's normal style: much more typical is the double qualification of a generalization near the beginning of the same chapter: "A romantic lover is a strange idolater, who *sometimes* cares not out of what log he frames the object of his adoration; *at least*, if nature has given that object any passable proportion of personal charms . . ." (I.v.56; v.19, my italics). The tone of domestic irony continues for a couple of paragraphs to include Cæcilia's eventual marital fate, but as soon as Aunt Rachel has courtesied to the bride, the narrator hastens to make his apology, which must now sound a little disingenuous, for plaguing us with old-fashioned politics.⁵⁰ The historical content of chapter V for which he apologizes can be seen to be embedded in a story which in itself is a domestic one, and the brief breakthrough of this domesticity into the discourse of the novel amounts to the invocation, and then prompt suppression, of a genre of fiction to which the political and historical nature of this novel is implicitly opposed.

⁵⁰ Donald Davie judges the early chapters of *Waverley* to be "within measurable distance of, for instance, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*" ("*Waverley*" in D.D. Devlin, ed. *Walter Scott: Modern Judgements* [London: Macmillan, 1968] 86). Davie's implication is that this proximity is a consequence of Scott's not yet having found a style of his own, as he did on resumption of the novel in 1814.

Thus, just as Waverley's reading practice was characterized as feminine with reference to one sort of fiction, so his real nature and ultimate destiny, however obscured or warped by that reading practice, is implicitly assimilated to another. No misreading of *Waverley* has been so widespread and so influential as that of the narrator's comment already quoted, that Waverley felt "that the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced" (III.xiii.179-80; lx.283). The misreading takes *history* here to mean the stuff of history books, the world of politics and military action. But of course it is precisely this world that Waverley is rejecting at this point, for that world was only appealing so long as he saw it through the eyes of romance. Once he sees the world as it is, and can choose between domesticity and politics, between Cæcilia Stubbs and the army, uninfluenced by the adolescent fantasy of the early chapters, there is no doubt how he will decide. The "history" that Waverley commences at the end of III.xiii should be understood in its eighteenth-century sense of "narrative" and read as effectively synonymous with *novel*. The narrator here returns Waverley from his educative sojourn in the alien world of politics to his own habitat, namely domesticity and the domestic novel. His *real* history, in the sense of the story within which he can develop his true character and proper virtues, will begin with his marriage to Rose. Rose's domesticity is thus not only an anti-political virtue borrowed from another sort of fiction, but also a signifier of that sort of fiction as a whole. Similarly, Waverley's domesticity cannot be subsumed in the political content of the

novel as an allegory of history,⁴ because that domesticity is constituted as politics' defining other by the text's appeal to another sort of fiction. However, domestic fiction is never mentioned by any of its possible names in the novel. It is not listed in the catalogue in I.i, and when Edgeworth is praised in the final chapter, it is for her Irish novels and not for her domestic ones.

Flora is central to the novel because she contains this same juxtaposition of the political and the domestic within herself. The narrator comments on her brother's unique historical position:

Had Fergus Mac-Ivor lived sixty years sooner than he did, he would, in all probability, have wanted the polished manner and knowledge of the world which he now possessed; and had he lived sixty years later, his ambition and love of rule would have lacked the fuel which his situation now afforded. (I.xix.292; xix.91-2)

Fergus is both a tribal chieftain and a European statesman. His sister seems to be in a similar situation, but the virtues at stake in her person are not two modalities of the political, but the political and the domestic. The narrator expands at length on her selfless devotion to the Stuart cause in I.xxi, but pauses to note that, although "highly accomplished" (I.xxi.321; xxi.100), "yet she had not learned to substitute the gloss of politeness for the reality of feeling" (I.xxi.321; xxi.101). After describing her use of her diplomatic skills to prevent a quarrel between her brother and Bradwardine, the chapter concludes, "To this young lady, now presiding at the female empire of the tea-table, Fergus introduced Captain Waverley, whom she received with the usual forms of politeness" (I.xxi.326; xxi.102). This wild variation in

tone is very like the awkward style of I.v, which attempts a similar juxtaposition of the political and the domestic, in a similar context of female government. In Flora's case, however, it is clear that the uncertainty here is also an uncertainty about the extent to which she is unique and particular to her historical situation, and the extent to which she partakes of qualities universally feminine, that is, domestic.

Flora herself plays up the extent to which she is an exception to the rule of her gender: "my feelings . . . are so different from those usually ascribed to young women at my period of life . . ." (II.iv.68; xxvii.135); the restoration of the Stuarts, she tells Waverley, "has so occupied my mind as to exclude every thought respecting what is called my own settlement in life" (II.iv.69; xxvii.135) and she goes on to make those comments about Waverley's domesticity that we noted above. Waverley's way of falling in love with Flora is to let the universal in her be hidden by what is particular; that is, to assimilate her to the romanticized politics of Jacobitism rather than to domesticity itself:

All that was commonplace, all that belonged to the every-day world, was melted away and obliterated in these dreams of imagination, which only remembered with advantage the points of grace and dignity that distinguished Flora from the generality of her sex, not the particulars which she held in common with them. (II.vi.97; xxix.143)

The comments quoted above from I.xxi, which tend to place Flora rather in the domestic category, are the narrator's, not Waverley's. The latter's romanticizing perspective is, note, the effect of the absence of its object: "I am not sure if the ladies

understand the full value of the influence of absence . . . Distance, in truth, produces in idea the same effect as in real perspective" (II.vi.95-6; xxix.143). Indeed, Waverley's hope that his agreement with Fergus to marry Flora might be brought to a successful conclusion is entirely based on Flora's absence: "The sensation of hope, with which he had nursed his affection in absence of the beloved object, seemed to vanish in her presence . . ." (II.xx.303; xliii.206).

It is this ambiguous figure, however, who identifies for us the domestic virtues and destinies of both Waverley and Rose, and not the narrator. If she is on the border of the domestic and the political, if the narrator is obliged to describe her at once as capable of the domestic virtues and as placed beyond the domestic pale by her political commitments, it is this that allows her a position with regard to Waverley and Rose that is closer to that of the domestic *authoress* than that of a domestic heroine. She observes the trials of others rather than participating in them, and she ensures that they will marry, both by turning Waverley down herself, and by showing her friend to best advantage (although, as the narrator hastens to point out, in the most discreet manner possible). She gains from her historical position the ironic distance from the progress of hero and heroine towards domestic content afforded Burney or Edgeworth by their authorial position. Both her perception, and this successful action based on her perception, stand in marked contrast both to Waverley's ignorance and passivity, and to the error and failure of the other, male, matchmakers in the novel. These include

Charles Edward Stuart himself, who claims "I know all" (II.xx.306; xliii.207) but has in fact mistaken the object of Waverley's desire entirely; and Fergus, who tries to arrange Waverley's marriage to Flora for the sake of political rather than domestic ends. Indeed, the very historical content of the novel can be seen as a story of the failure of male agency on a grand scale at the political level, one which spills over into domestic failure as well.

Yet because of the necessity of portraying political and military events to which they alone are witnesses, because, in other words, of the cognitive claims of the text to historical realism, it is overwhelmingly from the point of view of the male characters that it is narrated. When, therefore, we are given a piece of dialogue at III.v.68-72 (lii.249-50) between the two heroines alone, without the involvement either of male characters or of the narrator, it constitutes another discontinuity in the prevailing historical/cognitive discourse of the text.⁵¹ This conversation ends, indeed, with an almost unique utterance of Rose's thoughts in direct speech. Rose's point of view is almost uniformly absent, despite the narrator's assurance that "She was too frank, too confiding, too kind . . ." (I.xiv.207; xiv.66). This silence is significant, for while Flora's is the point of view from

⁵¹ I shall have a lot more to say about the significance of autonomous female-female dialogue in the next two chapters. Ian Duncan notes the oddness of this dialogue: "[T]he author writes the scene as a female fantasy, part of a conversation between Rose and Flora. Waverley's height of romance is represented to be a female project, a collaboration between Rose's dream and Flora's -- let us not forget -- satiric, even contemptuous utterance . . ." (Duncan 70). But Waverley's misconception of his destiny as "romance" is partly what Flora is being satiric about. This scene is not an example of romance energy (Flora's) being used to domestic ends, but an example of the autonomous feminine discourse of the domestic novel itself: its combination of satire and wish-fulfillment is the domestic novel's exactly.

which domesticity is perceived, Rose's is the point of view of domesticity itself. Its general omission is part of the same narrative strategy as elides her activity on Waverley's behalf on his second, unconscious, stay at Tully Veolan that we previously noted and to which we must now return.

(iv) Feminine agency and domestic fiction

For Flora's leaving Waverley free to marry Rose is not the most important instance of female agency in the novel: that is Rose's care for and protection of Waverley at Janet's cottage, helped by Highland Alice (whom Waverley recognizes) and Old Janet (whom Waverley knows by name, but does not recognize as Davie Gellately's mother from Tully Veolan). This action is central both in the discourse of the novel (it occupies II.xiv/xxxvii, the mid-point of the novel, *about the middle of the second volume*) and to the story, since Rose's intervention here prevents Waverley's capture by the government forces, and allows him to take part in the rebellion that fills the text in the next 23 chapters. Indeed, the discursive necessity of maintaining Waverley's point of view as one from which the text can portray that rebellion can be seen as dictating the course of the story here, in this action of Rose's. The historical/ cognitive capacity of the discourse, its description of the plans and actions of men, is thus dependent upon a woman's agency within the story. But we can go further than this, because, as we have seen, Rose is not

simply a female character within a historically realistic novel, but the representative within that novel of another sort of fiction. What all this taken together suggests is that the cognitive capacity of *Waverley*, its historical realism, is somehow *made possible* by its inclusion of another type of fictional discourse, one which does not make those cognitive claims.

The explanation for this apparent dependence begins less in Rose's action as such, and more in its elision from the text until near the end. Because this action is itself narrated from Waverley's point of view, Rose's responsibility for it can be excluded from the discourse until III.xviii (lxv): there the narrator explains that Rose's action, and the location of Waverley's concealment were "such points of our narrative as, according to the custom of story-tellers, we deemed it fit to leave unexplained, for the purpose of exciting the reader's curiosity" (III.xviii.263-4; lxv. 308-9: see above, p.51). In other words, the identity of Waverley's saviour was suppressed in order that its later revelation could provide the text with a certain sort of closure, one that we might call (after Barthes) *hermeneutic* closure.⁵² Rose provides the text with two sorts of ending, one by this revelation of her crucial agency, and another by her marriage to Waverley.

It seems, however, that Rose can only perform this function at the cost of its elision. Rose maintains Waverley as a useful point of view on the events of the story, but this very maintenance creates a gap where Rose's name should be (one

⁵² Barthes x. 17 and *passim*.

might say that Rose's action is *self-effacing*) that provides the possibility of closure. Her marriage, too, is inevitably the surrender of the power of the young, single woman to choose a husband, the only real power that the domestic heroine usually has. The Baron replies to Waverley's proposal with the words, "She had never a will but her old father's" (III.xx.287; lxvii.316), but not only has this been mightily disproved, its very disproof prompted Edward's resolution to marry her in the first place. Two gaps are opened up in the text: the delay in Waverley's return to his domestic nature while he provides us with a point of view on historical events; and the suppression of Rose's responsibility for keeping him in that role. Edward's ignorance of his own domestic nature and his ignorance of the identity of his protectress are the same misrecognition of Rose. Both gaps constitute the same suspension of Rose and her domesticity from the discourse of the text. Rose's agency as a character seems dependent on that agency not being acknowledged: as soon as she is named, her fate is decided upon by men, rather than the reverse. Her action is necessary to continue the story to its proper end, but that proper end consists in her abandonment of the possibility of action.

Domestic fiction, rejected by this novel after the first five chapters, thus seems to return within it as that feminine agency which allows the story to have a middle and an end, to have, in fact, a plot. In this female agency, in other words, are isolated those aspects of the novel which make it a novel, rather than a slice of history or a collection of antiquarian observations.

Fictionality is still understood in terms of feminine domestic fiction, and fictionality is still necessary to the writing of a novel. But because of Scott's new and sweeping cognitive claims for *this* novel, he represses this fictionality in feminine, domestic terms even while it is a condition of his success. It is as if, given the rival authority of the domestic novel as an already-established and morally respectable genre that was nevertheless fictional, Scott has used domestic fiction within his own as a sign, as the agent, of fictionality itself. Waverley's *home*, Waverley's home, is feminine domestic fiction. It is however an origin that can only propel, and a destiny that can only draw, so long as it is not named. It is the repressed, the other, of Scott's cognitive discourse.

To say that the cognitive claims of a discourse might be conditional on repression is to abandon Foucault's conception of discourse in an important way. For Foucault, discourse is all surface: it has no hidden depths.

We do not seek below what is manifest the half silent murmur of another discourse; we must show why it could not be other than it was, in what respect it is exclusive of any other, how it assumes, in the midst of others and in relation to them, a place that no other could occupy.⁵³

The half silent murmur of another discourse is precisely what we have found in *Waverley*, and we have seen how its dominant discourse can function in a novel only by its being *inclusive* of that other. And to understand why this should be so, we must return to the figure of the reader.

⁵³ Foucault 28.

I argued earlier in this chapter that Scott's cognitive claims for his novel were an attempt to find a validating other for his text, given that he no longer had a generically-defined readership to fulfil this function. The shaping relation between text and reader that characterized genre-fiction was replaced in the first chapter of *Waverley* with a shaping relation between text and an independently knowable reality. But domestic fiction, a genre omitted from the list in chapter I, is also shaped by a very well-developed sense of its own readership: as a didactic novel, as a *Bildungsroman*, the domestic novel addresses a reader defined as sharing the class and gender of its heroine.⁵⁴ It is no coincidence, then, that the residual contractual relationship that Scott acknowledges with his reader -- his obligation as story-teller to arouse and then satisfy the reader's *curiosity* -- should be fulfilled by the same female agency as met the plot requirements of the novel *qua* work of fiction.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Patronage* is certainly an exception here, given its unusual inclusion of male, professional affairs, and Marilyn Butler comments that Edgeworth "wrote about, and even for, all classes of society; addressed herself on general issues to the public at large" in a way that set her apart from, for example, Jane Austen (Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries* [Oxford: O.U.P. 1981] 97). Interestingly, Butler explains this in terms of the enlightenment education that Edgeworth enjoyed and the younger Austen did not; an education that she did share with Scott, however. It may be that my explanation of the disappearance of the reader in *Waverley* lays too much emphasis on the perceived fragmentation of the reading public and not enough on the survival in Scott of the eighteenth-century belief that all rational beings are essentially identical: two apparently contradictory circumstances whose effect on the perceived identity of the audience for novels might be never the less the same.

⁵⁵ Note how this acknowledgement is the final echo of the description of Waverley's feminine reading habits earlier in the novel. The reader's curiosity with regard to Rose's identity is also Waverley's in the original episode, when his view point on the world is reduced to a hole in the partition from which he has managed to push a nail: "But since the days of our grandmother Eve, the gratification of inordinate curiosity has generally borne its penalty in disappointment" (II.xiv.216; xxxvii.180) --

In fact, it is domestic fiction, and not the real world, which replaces the reader as the defining other of this novel's cognitive discourse. Intersubjectivity is replaced not by realism, but by interdiscursivity, as that which makes the novel readable despite its ignorance of any particular reader. *Waverley* is primarily heterogeneous not in its variety of perspectives on historical and political reality, a heterogeneity that, as Iser describes it, leaves its cognitive claims affirmed, but rather in the opposing of this cognitive discourse as a whole with something else. Scott indeed avoids choosing between political points of view, not by appealing to an extra-perspectival reality but by juxtaposing his cognitive discourse with that of the domestic novel. If *Waverley* is an utterance within an enlightenment discourse of history which cuts across our traditional concept of "the novel", as critics, before and after Foucault, agree that it is, then it also includes within itself extraneous elements which cannot be subsumed beneath the heading "history". It is by examining these elements that we discover the terms on which it remains a novel despite, and indeed renegotiates its novelness with, its historical-cognitive discourse. For, if we accept the thoughts of M. M. Bakhtin on what sets the novel apart from other literary genres, it is not by merely including elements from domestic fiction that makes *Waverley* a novel; it is rather the resultant heterogeneity itself that does so. But to characterize the novel as Bakhtin does, as the

until the end of a novel, that is. We have in this last quote the association of curiosity and gratification, moral censure and the feminine (the last two in the reference to Eve) that we noted and qualified in I.iii and v. It seems that despite the respectability of domestic fiction, its fictionality remains associated to some extent for Scott with the bad reading that it so often criticizes.

space in which different socially functioning discourses are juxtaposed and ironized, leaves the novel itself no place as an utterance within Foucault's scheme. The novel depends on the existence of discursive formations as Foucault describes them, but cannot itself be included in any particular one. Novelistic discourse as understood by Bakhtin defies exterior definition of the sort described by Foucault and practiced by Ferris.

We are now in a position to go further than Bakhtin, for as we have seen, *Waverley* does not merely juxtapose these discursive formations: it includes within itself a set of discursive power-relations that is evident in the ways in which its various discourses act upon each other. Principle amongst those ways appears to be its plot. It is by means of its plot that *Waverley* first evokes, then suppresses in one form while re-evoking in another (we might call this whole process *revoking*) the discourse of feminine domestic fiction. Where the plots of Scott's fiction are usually seen as vehicles for an enlightenment understanding of the historical process, the plot of *Waverley* appears to be the way in which enlightenment historical discourse works out its place with regard to a more purely novelistic discourse within a novel. Within this negotiation it seems to be the need for closure, for an ending, that demands that feminine discourse return within the text, for an ending is the one thing that enlightenment historicism cannot provide.

The performative aspect of an utterance lies according to Foucault in the way it alters interdiscursive boundaries; but if we are to regard *Waverley* as an utterance, as Ferris does, we are

forced to realize that those interdiscursive boundaries exist within the text, and their renegotiation within the text gives it a performative aspect as describable as its historical effects. What this examination of *Waverley* suggests is that its discursive heterogeneity is perhaps a consequence of the fragmentation and anonymity of the modern novel readership. Where the performative effect of a piece of language is usually a function of its audience, the performative effect of a novel like Scott's is played out in its own plot. To understand how this happens in Scott's next novel, *Guy Mannering*, we will be obliged to turn away from Foucault to Bakhtin and Kristeva, theorists of what Benjamin called "the incommensurable . . . in the representation of human life."

Chapter 2

Guy Mannering and Epistolary Fiction

Introduction: the story

In this and several of the following chapters I will be discussing some of the least read of the Scottish novels, and because narrative structure plays an important part in my argument, I will begin each discussion of such a novel with a summary (as brief as is possible) of the story that that novel tells.

We first meet Guy Mannering as a young man on a tour of Scotland in the 1760s. He stays at Ellangowan, the ancestral home of the ancient but impoverished Bertram family on the Solway coast, on the night that a son and heir is born. A former student of astrology, he casts its horoscope before he leaves. The child, Harry, is nearly five when he is kidnapped by pirates, after they kill the customs-man who was looking after him. On the same day, Mrs. Bertram dies giving birth to a daughter, Lucy.

Seventeen years later Mannering returns to the area. In the intervening years he has joined the army and reached the rank of Colonel; he has also married his sweetheart, Sophia, and they have had a daughter, Julia. On station in India, however, the proud and aristocratic Mannering begins to suspect his wife of impropriety with one of his junior officers, Vanbeest Brown, although in fact she is covering for her daughter, who is in love

with the apparently low-born Brown. He calls Brown out and shoots him in a duel, leaving him for dead. Sophia dies soon afterward. Brown survives, however, and follows the Mannerings back to Britain to continue his clandestine romance with Julia. He is in fact Harry Bertram, having been brought up in ignorance of his true identity by the pirates in Holland.

Mannering finds Bertram bankrupt and dying, and Ellangowan in the process of being sold to Gilbert Glossin, Bertram's crooked secretary who has ruined him to create this chance for himself. Mannering buys another house nearby instead, Woodbourne, and takes in Lucy Bertram and her eccentric tutor Dominie Sampson, as well as his daughter, who has been staying with a friend of his in Cumbria since their return from India. Brown follows them to Scotland, staying for some time as the guest of a Liddesdale farmer, Dandie Dinmont. But the coach north gets lost in a snow-storm, and, while trying to find shelter, he is taken in by Meg Merrilies, an old gypsy woman who recognizes him as the heir of Ellangowan. Soon after he stumbles across Julia, Lucy and a young local man, Hazlewood: he is mistaken for one of the pirates who have recently attacked Woodbourne, and in the scuffle Hazlewood is shot. Brown flees.

Glossin too realizes who Brown really is, for he had a hand in the original kidnapping. He has him arrested, and plans with his pirate allies for a second kidnapping. But Meg Merrilies intervenes, Brown is rescued, and brought to Woodbourne, where his true identity is revealed. She takes him back to the site of his kidnapping to confront its perpetrator, the pirate Hatteraick, whom

they capture; but Meg is fatally injured in the struggle, and dies proclaiming Bertram the new Laird to the tenants. Hatteraick kills Glossin in prison before committing suicide. Brown, now Harry Bertram, marries Julia, and Lucy Bertram marries Hazlewood.

(i) Scott and Smollett: enlightenment discourse and female voices

Before moving on to examine the discursive formations at work in *Guy Mannering*, let me begin by identifying instead two sorts of voices that speak within it: that of Mannering himself, his friend Mervyn, and the lawyer Pleydell on the one hand, and that of Julia Mannering on the other. The former is that of the educated and liberal gentleman, professional or gentry, with something of the sentimental in his attitudes to history and art. It is very much the speech of the man of the Scottish Enlightenment, an identification forced on us by the contrast between these characters and those inarticulate others that the young Mannering first meets at Ellangowan in I.ii, Bertram senior and Abel Sampson.

Both these latter two are set apart by their inability to hold a rational conversation. Sampson has been unable to get a place as a minister because of his inarticulacy in the pulpit (I.ii.29), and the implication is that this is of a piece with his unenlightened religious fundamentalism. This is brought out by the contrast

between his inarticulacy and the sermon by Dr. Erskine that Guy Mannering hears in Edinburgh, in which the suffusion of Scottish Calvinism with eighteenth-century metaphysics produces a new fluency: "Something there was of an antiquated turn of argument and metaphor, but it only served to give zest and peculiarity to the style of elocution" (II.xvi.287). Bertram senior's speech is in contrast fluent enough, but totally without order. "Mannering, by this time, was aware that one thought linked strangely on to another in the concatenation of worthy Mr Bertram's ideas . . ." (I.v.73). Furthermore, "Mr Bertram never embraced a general or abstract idea" (I.v.75), and can only conceive of the law in terms of its officers. Although in Bertram's case this is a genuine incapacity and not just a cover for selfishness, this is an incapacity he has in common with the agent of his destruction, the lawyer Glossin, of whom the narrator later jokes that "we presume that our readers, from what they already know of this gentleman, will acquit him of being actuated by any zealous or intemperate love of abstract justice" (II.ix.165-6). Note here the combination of legal jargon ("acquit") with the ironic disparagement of those unenlightened qualities, zeal and intemperance. When Bertram is made a J.P., he cannot understand this in other than personal terms, "as a personal mark of favour from his sovereign" (I.vi.91) and hence, "unwilling to confine his gratitude to mere feelings, or verbal expressions, he gave full current to the new-born zeal of office" (I.vi.92), zeal which culminates in the eviction of the gypsies from his land. It is no coincidence that Sampson and Bertram Senior represent a

denial of the two foundations of enlightenment society in Scotland, the law and moderate Calvinism; foundations united in their fostering of the abstract argument that Bertram is incapable of, and in thus providing a basis for the eighteenth-century Scottish philosophical achievement.¹

Guy Mannering on the other hand is "curious to investigate the manners of the country" in which he finds himself (I.v.81). He collects folk-songs, making his own verse-paraphrase of one of Meg's (I.iv.64-5).² His friend, Mervyn, prefaces a letter with a dissertation on the right to defend one's property in civil society (I.xvi.253-6). And of course Pleydell is able to introduce Mannering to all the illuminati of the Athens of the North on his visit there. Now while the contrast as I have outlined it clearly demarcates these characters as men of the Enlightenment, it does not establish a role for enlightenment discourse as such at the level of the text, for, with rare exceptions such as Mervyn's letter, most of the defining differences that I have so far listed have

¹ For the centrality of Scottish Law, lawyers, and the legal system to the culture of the Scottish Enlightenment, see Anand C. Chitnis, *The Scottish Enlightenment: a Social History* (London: Croom Helm, 1976) ch.4; Neil MacCormick, "Law and Enlightenment" in Campbell and Skinner (eds.) *The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1982) 150-166; and Peter Stein, "Law and Society in Scottish Thought" in Mitchison and Phillipson (eds.), *Scotland in the Age of Improvement* (Edinburgh: E.U.P., 1970). Chitnis describes them as "like a hub of a wheel in the eighteenth century, with spokes going out to touch most areas of élite activity" (75). Its effects on theoretical history came "through the concern that legal and non-legal intellectuals had for the Law as a social discipline . . . [For example,] Adam Ferguson was one of the intellectuals who saw that law, in its intimate connection with property, would necessarily be an instrument in the hands of the wealthy and powerful. As their composition changed so too might the Law" (85-6). For the Presbyterian connection, see R.B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: E.U.P., 1985).

² I shall discuss the significance of folklore-collection as an enlightenment activity later in this chapter.

been reported by the general narrator of the novel, rather than directly given to the reader in the voice of these characters themselves. But the narrator's voice too belongs with Mannering's, Mervyn's, and Pleydell's. At the level of the text, the general narrative voice does not just report enlightenment discourse, it is itself constituted by that discourse.

As an example one can cite the narrator's ironic disparagement of the Bertrams' feudal past ("They had made war, raised rebellions, been defeated, beheaded, and hanged, as became a family of importance, for many centuries," I.ii.17) and interest in their declining fortunes in an age of social and economic progress. The transcription of Meg's song noted above is Mannering's, but given us by the narrator instead of the original. On many occasions the judgement of the narrator is indistinguishable from that of Mannering, for example in their estimation of Erskine's sermon referred to above, or of the architectural and picturesque qualities of Ellangowan (I.iv.58-61). In I.v the young Mannering is forced to revise his earlier idealization of Bertram's modest rural life, when his host launches into an uncharacteristically fluent tirade against the petty indignities forced on him by his wealthier neighbours. This lecture gives Mannering

ample time to reflect upon the disadvantages attending the situation, which, an hour before, he had thought worthy of so much envy. Here was a country gentleman, whose most estimable quality seemed his perfect good nature, secretly fretting himself and murmuring against others for causes which, compared with any real evil in life, must weigh like dust in the balance; but such is the equal distribution of Providence. To those who lie out of the road of great afflictions, are assigned petty vexations, which answer all the purpose of disturbing their serenity; and every reader must have observed, that neither natural apathy nor acquired philosophy can

render country gentlemen insensible to the grievances which occur at elections, quarter sessions, and meetings of trustees. (I.v.80-1)

Most of the passage quoted can be read as a report of Mannering's thoughts in free indirect speech, until the appeal to "every reader" obliges us to recognize that the narrator's judgements coincide exactly with Mannering's.

The scene at Ellengowan on the day of the roup provides a more complex example of free indirect speech. The narrator seems at first to share the discourse with a Mannering both older and more complex, but a reader who knows how the story develops is able to detect a gap between them. Ostensibly the attentions of both narrator and hero are turned outwards, or rather to the gap between the objects of outward sense, of nature, and the feelings and thoughts of the observer. The former are unchanged, the latter embittered by the course his life has taken since his last visit to Scotland. It is at precisely this point where the reader seems to be told how this story is to continue that the ambiguity produced by the common discourse comes into play.

Then, life and love were new . . . And now . . . his best hope was to find a retirement in which he might nurse the melancholy that was to accompany him to his grave. (I.xiii.211)

This seems to be at once an anticipation of the story on the part of the narrator and the intention of the hero on first returning to Scotland. On a second reading of the novel, however, it can be read as the latter alone: what had seemed to be a reference to the story was in fact only a move in the hero's sentimental discourse. Similarly, the statement that

It is disgusting also, to see the scenes of domestic society and seclusion thrown open to the gaze of the curious and the vulgar; to hear their coarse speculations and jests upon the fashions and furniture to which they are unaccustomed, -- a frolicksome humour much cherished by the whiskey which in Scotland is always put in circulation on such occasions (I.xiii.213)

might seem to be the narrator's opinion as well as the hero's, (especially given the general knowledge of Scottish life exemplified in the last sentence that seems to imply a more general acquaintance with Scottish manners than Mannering could have at this point in the story). Until, that is, we return to it aware that Brown's estimation of Mannering as "an oppressive aristocratic man" made just before (I.xii.203) is borne out in the opinions of others. Then it seems less a report on the nature of the scene, than an admission of the limitations of Mannering's point of view. The interpenetration of the classes, the multiplicity of voices, that so offends Mannering is a principal feature of Scott's text itself.

Indeed, the interpenetration of the classes and the resulting multiplicity of voices are part of Scott's subject matter here as in all the Waverley Novels. In the previous chapter we discussed enlightenment theoretical history as shaping Scott's understanding of historical process, but it could also be used to understand the structure of a society as it existed at a particular point in time. After all, the tribal organization of Highland society coexisted alongside feudal and then commercial Lowland society for hundreds of years, as well as preceding it. The conflict that can be seen in retrospect as between old and new, between

reform and reaction, as the movement from one stage of society into the next, appear at the time as class-conflict of some sort. This is certainly the case in *Guy Mannering*, which seems not to be a historical novel at all. Set in the early 1780s, the comparatively small gap between the times described and Scott's own, and the absence of actual historical events, put it at the margins of what we would now call a historical novel. But the interest here in social evolution and class-interaction is as great as in any of Scott's portraits of revolution.³ The place of the Highlanders is here taken by the gypsies, and a substantial part of I.vii is given over to describing their place in society in political and economic terms, including their inevitable equation with other peoples in the "tribal" stage of human development: the gypsies survived among their settled neighbours "like wild Indians among European settlers" (I.vii.103). We are at the point in *Guy Mannering* where theoretical history gives birth to its most enduring child: not a theory of universal history, but sociology.

Scott was not the first novelist to bring a middle-aged English hero to Edinburgh to meet its intellectual luminaries, nor the first to give such a hero a sociological curiosity about Scottish

³ For example, David Brown identifies "the historical action of the novel" as "the battle between the aristocratic Bertrams and the middle-class Glossins of the time" (Brown 35). R. C. Gordon sees the novel's various strands united by an interest in the Law's triumph over violence, and its inevitable drawbacks, in a modern society: the defeat of the pirates, the eviction of the gypsies, Dinmont's boundary dispute, Pleydell's role in restoring Ellangowan to its rightful heir. He goes on to conclude, "The best things in *Guy Mannering* appear as items of social history" (Gordon 29-31; 34). Robin Mayhead compares the portrayal here of a declining gentry with the fall of the old Highland order and the conditional survival of its Lowland counterpart. Robin Mayhead, *Walter Scott* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1973) 71-73.

society. Smollett's *Humphry Clinker* (1771) sets itself immediately apart from other eighteenth-century novels by its telling a picaresque tale in epistolary form. It is not in this that its great originality lies, however. The picaresque novel and the epistolary novel were perhaps the two most popular narrative forms of the age, and Smollett begins by putting their combination to a very eighteenth-century purpose: namely, to robustly satirize the vices of the age, and particularly the shallow foolishness of the spa-towns and the fractious stink of London. Matthew Bramble's perceptions are the main source of this satire, whether in his own words (his letters account for 27 of the novel's 82) or as reported by his increasingly sympathetic nephew Jerry Melford (who writes 28). Jerry, for example, describes Bramble's conversation with a philosophical doctor at the Clifton baths who denies that there is anything inherently repulsive about shit and recommends inhaling its fumes for a variety of ailments. It is a confrontation reminiscent of Swift, or indeed of Sterne.⁴

More significant for our purposes is Bramble's rage against the mob, both at Bath and at London. What most disgusts him about the former (and what most entertains his nephew) is the uninhibited mixing of all social classes in the public rooms: "This is what my uncle reprobates, as a monstrous jumble of heterogeneous principles."⁵ Similarly he complains of London that "there is no distinction or subordination left" in "this

⁴ Tobias Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967) ix.45-8.

⁵ Smollett xix.78.

incongruous monster, called *the public*."⁶ The horror of heterogeneity is Mannering's exactly, though given scope here to become full-blown satire. There is also a parallel in our realization that Bramble is not simply "an oppressive aristocratic man" any more than Mannering: both have their sentimental side, a vulnerability that Jerry identifies as the source of much of Bramble's irritability, and that we discover in the origins of Mannering's bitterness with the world.⁷

This satirical function is however abruptly abandoned as soon as Bramble's party arrive in Scotland. Bramble's first comments once across the border are on the growing of wheat in East Lothian without enclosures using seaweed as fertilizer, and thoughts on possible improvements.⁸ The undifferentiated crush of humanity in Edinburgh is not condemned, and the custom of emptying chamber-pots into the street at night he classes as

-- A practice to which I can by no means be reconciled; for notwithstanding all the care that is taken by their scavengers to remove this nuisance every morning by break of day, enough still remains to offend the eyes, as well as other organs of those whom use has not hardened against all delicacy of sensation.

The inhabitants seem insensible to these impressions, and are apt to imagine the disgust that we avow is little better than affectation; but they ought to have some compassion for strangers, who have not been used to this kind of sufferance . . .⁹

Attitudes to excrement are no longer evidence of corrupt senses or intellectual atrophy: they are to be understood as part of a set

⁶ Smollett xxx.119-120.

⁷ "He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility of a heart, which is tender, even to a degree of weakness" (xiii.57).

⁸ Smollett liii.252.

⁹ Smollett liii.254-5.

of customs, specific to the society in which Bramble finds himself. He is no longer the satirist, with a personal, moral (even, according to Jery, *physical*) stake in the society around him: he has become instead a detached observer. This is the role he continues to fulfil for the remainder of his stay in Scotland, and it is one that his nephew also adopts. Bramble describes the distinct nature of Scottish Law, education, and religion (letter lvi); Jery describes Highland society in the aftermath of the '45 (letter lvii); and Bramble continues with thoughts on northern agriculture and the rise of Glasgow as a commercial centre (letter lviii), on improvement, industry, and colonization (letter lix). In this last letter, indeed, Bramble engages directly with the terminology of the theoretical historians: clan identity is based, he comments,

on something prior to the *feudal system*, about which the writers of this age have made such a pother, as if it was a new discovery, like the *Copernican system*. Every peculiarity of policy, custom, and even temperament, is affectedly traced to this origin . . . The connection between the clans and their chiefs is, without all doubt, *patriarchal*.¹⁰

What seems at first to be an attack on the sweeping generalizations of theoretical history ends by accepting its vocabulary, and simply pushing the type of society to which the Highlanders can be assigned back one stage. The principle narrators of *Humphry Clinker* adopt the cognitive discourse of the Scottish Enlightenment to describe the country that produced it.

It is not my intention here to explore the meaning of this expedition from satire into sociology for Smollett's novel as a

¹⁰ Smollett lix.292.

whole, or how their combination in its last quarter provide it with one sort of closure. *Humphry Clinker* is easily seen as an anticipation of the sociological interests of later fiction, a dramatization of one of the ways that the novel developed in the next 50 or 60 years. However, satire and sociology are not the only perspectives of the novel. The novel's epistolary form allows both moral and cognitive functions to be interrupted by other voices, neither Jerry's nor Bramble's: female voices, namely those of Jerry's sister Lydia (who writes 11 letters); Bramble's sister Tabitha (5 letters); and Win Jenkins, Tabitha's maid (10 letters). Their concerns are different: romantic, practical (in Tabitha's attempt to run the estate from afar) and religious (in Tabitha and Win's involvement in Methodism). But while the content of their letters may be distinct from those male letters that make up the bulk of the novel, all three women provide it with another sort of ending by getting married. Lydia is in this regard particularly interesting. Tabitha's increasingly desperate search for a husband runs through the novel and generates some humour; Win's is rather less well anticipated. Lydia's is the culmination of an affair whose botched beginning is also the beginning of the novel. It is in order to take his niece away from the town where she has been at school and has fallen in love with a strolling player that Bramble plans his expedition in the first place.

The most striking similarity between *Humphry Clinker* and *Guy Mannering* lies in the latter's use of a very similar heroine to write very similar letters which interrupt the male, enlightenment

discourse that constitutes the bulk of the text. It is worthwhile to pause and note just how similar the experiences of Lydia Melford and Julia Mannering are. Both write to a school-friend from whom they have been separated by their father or uncle (Lydia to Laetitia Willis, Julia to Matilda Marchmont). Both are in love with young men, apparently penniless performers, but in fact heirs to large estates (Brown first approaches Julia at her guardian Arthur Mervyn's house in a boat, playing the flageolet, from the inn across the lake, "the resort," Mervyn writes to Mannering, "of walking gentlemen of all descriptions, poets, players, painters, musicians . . ." [I.xvi.263]); the alienation of both young men has been exacerbated by a duel or the prospect of a duel with one of the young lady's relatives (Bramble arrives just as Jerry and "Wilson" are priming their pistols; Mannering has actually shot and wounded "Brown"); both are moved from their established residence to be with their father-figures (Julia to Scotland, Lydia all round the country) and away from these presumptuous lovers.

O my dear Letty! what shall I say about poor Mr Wilson? I have promised to break off all correspondence, and if possible, to forget him: but alas! I begin to perceive that will not be in my power. [H.C. letter vi.38]

I wish he may forget me, for the sake of his own peace; and yet if he should, he must be a barbarous -- But it is impossible -- poor Wilson cannot be false or inconstant: I beseech him not to write to me, nor attempt to see me for some time . . . [H.C. letter vi.39]

I am vexed, that neither you nor I have received any further infor-

I have used every argument to convince him that this secret intercourse is dangerous to us both -- I even pressed him to pursue his views of fortune without farther regard to me . . .

[G.M. I.xviii.282]

. . . I must own, I think that by this time the gentleman might have given me some intimation what he was doing. Our intercourse may be an imprudent one, but it is not very complimentary to me, that Mr Vanbeest Brown should be the first to discover that, and to break off in consequence

mation of a certain person -- Sure it cannot be wilful neglect! -- O my dear Willis! I begin to be visited by strange fancies, and to have some melancholy doubts; which, however, it would be ungenerous to harbour without further inquiry. [H.C. letter xxi.88]

. . . Yet I have so good an opinion of poor Brown, that I cannot but think there is something extraordinary in his silence.
[G.M. II.viii.124-5]

Despite these remarkable similarities, the role of Julia's correspondence in *Guy Mannering* remains a problem in a way that Lydia's in *Humphry Clinker* is not: for where the latter's inclusion is *allowed* by the epistolary form of Smollett's novel, the former *introduces* epistolary form to a novel that is otherwise narrated in Scott's usual omniscient third person mode. What this suggests is that epistolary form in itself carries some meaning in the context of Scott's novel. We must now look at how that meaning is generated by the history of the novel in the 45 years between *Humphry Clinker* and *Guy Mannering*, precisely those years when the novel came to be dominated by feminine domestic fiction.¹¹

¹¹ The novel seems to have been already regarded as a female genre in 1771. Jerry Melford describes one of the hacks at S[mollett]'s dinner in London: "Tim had made shift to live many years by writing novels, at the rate of five pounds a volume; but that branch of business is now engrossed by female authors, who publish merely for the propagation of virtue, with so much ease and spirit, and delicacy, and knowledge of the human heart, and all in the serene tranquility of high life, that the reader is not only enchanted by their genius, but reformed by their morality" (Smollett xxxvii.160). But this is seven years before the publication of Burney's *Evelina*, which marks the beginning of the serious *domestic* novel as written by the women listed in chapter 1 above, however exactly that genre seems to be described in Jerry's semi-ironic aside.

(ii) Richardson and Burney: the autonomy of feminine discourse

Richardson: *Pamela* and *Clarissa*

We can take as our starting point a difference between Julia's letters and Lydia's, apparently trivial but in fact highlighting a difference in their respective functions which marks their novels' different relationships to eighteenth-century literary tradition. Lydia regrets the physical distance between herself and Laetitia as an impediment to sympathy. Clifton is a paradise: "nothing is wanting but an agreeable companion and a sincere friend";¹² at Edinburgh she faints at the sight of a man who looks very like Wilson: "These incidents would not touch me so nearly, if I had a sensible confidant to sympathize with my affliction, and comfort me with wholesome advice";¹³ once Wilson's true identity is revealed, "I more than ever feel that vacancy in my heart, which your presence alone can fill";¹⁴ "You will easily conceive how embarrassing this situation must be to a young inexperienced creature like me . . . and how much the presence of a friend and confidant would encourage and support me on this occasion."¹⁵

My dear companion and bed-fellow, it is a grievous addition to my other misfortunes, that I am deprived of your agreeable company and conversation, at a time when I need so much the comfort of your good humour and good sense . . . ¹⁶

¹² Smollett xii.55.

¹³ Smollett ix.297.

¹⁴ Smollett lxxvi.377.

¹⁵ Smollett lxxvii.378.

¹⁶ Smollett vi.38.

Accordingly, she looks for a confidante among her present company, choosing Win Jenkins; in London, the fashionable Lady Griskin takes the part of one of Lydia's suitors, and, thinking her friend's attentions reciprocated, "insisted upon my making her the confidante of my passion", though Lydia resists.¹⁷

This insistence that the sentimental heroine's confidante must be present in person for her to fulfil a morally supportive role runs counter to the practice of the eighteenth century's greatest writer of epistolary fiction, Samuel Richardson. For *Clarissa Harlowe*, there is no fundamental loss involved in maintaining her relationship with Anna Howe through letters rather than in Anna's physical company. "Indeed I have no delight, as I have often told you, equal to that which I take in conversing with you -- by *letter*, when I cannot in *person*" she writes near the beginning of *Clarissa*.¹⁸ Letters 6 and 7, written on either side of her last visit to Anna, express no particular joy at the prospect of being in Anna's presence, or profound regret at its loss; *Clarissa* must go along with her family's ban on further visits to her friend, but defies their prohibition on their correspondence. "That you and I, my dear, should love to write is no wonder. We have always from the time each could hold a pen delighted in epistolary correspondencies."¹⁹ It is a correspondence based on an absolutely honest exchange of feelings:

¹⁷ Smollett xxxviii.166.

¹⁸ Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa; or The History of a Young Lady* ed. Angus Ross (1747-8; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985) letter 4, 53. Similarly in letter 9: "the principal pleasure of my life, for such is your conversation by person and by letter . . ." (66).

¹⁹ Richardson, *Clarissa* letter 12, 74.

I shall think I have reason to be highly displeased with you, if, when you write to me, you endeavour to keep from me any secret of your heart . . . Nothing less than the knowledge of the inmost recesses of your heart can satisfy my love and my friendship.²⁰

But of this I assure you, that whatever interpretation my words were capable of, I *intended not* any reserve to you. I wrote my heart, at the time . . .²¹

In this respect, Julia Mannering must be counted with Clarissa Harlowe rather than Lydia Melford. Once in Scotland, she has a present candidate for the position of confidante in the shape of Lucy Bertram, but chooses instead to maintain her correspondence with Matilda.

Is it possible for me to forget that you are the chosen of my heart, in whose faithful bosom I have deposited every feeling which your poor Julia dares to acknowledge to herself? And you do me equal injustice in upbraiding me with exchanging your friendship for that of Lucy Bertram. I assure you she has not the materials I must seek for in a bosom confidante. . . .

. . . She is, to be sure, a very pretty, a very sensible, a very affectionate girl, and I think there are few persons to whose consolatory friendship I could have recourse more freely in what are called the *real evils* of life. But then these so seldom come in one's way, and one wants a friend who will sympathize with distresses of sentiment, as well as with actual misfortune. (II.viii.119-20)

However, the implication of Julia's words here, that the "distresses of sentiment" are somehow not "*real*" or "*actual*" evils or misfortunes, is not an implication that we find in the mouths of Richardson's heroines. It is a doubt about the factuality of what is written or spoken between women that Julia shares with those women novelists who wrote after Richardson, and in this sense

²⁰ Richardson, *Clarissa* letter 37: Miss Howe to Miss Clarissa Harlowe, 174.

²¹ Richardson, *Clarissa* letter 38: Miss Clarissa Harlowe to Miss Howe, 176.

against him; one that is clearest in the early novels of Frances Burney.

Julia and Matilda, like Clarissa and Anna, *construct* their reality in their correspondence, where Lydia simply *reports* her situation to Laetitia. Julia and Clarissa are able through their correspondences to maintain their own value systems in the face of social and familial pressures to conform to a different set of expectations than that of their correspondents. A heroine's use of her letters to sustain a moral identity over and against the identity offered by those immediately around her is already the substance of Richardson's first novel, *Pamela*. Pamela's saving relationship is with her parents, whom she has left to work as a servant to Mr. B's mother. When her mistress dies, and Mr. B. begins his attempts to seduce her, her written address to them is what gives her the strength to resist, even when she knows that her letters are not getting through. The physical absence of her parents leaves Pamela physically vulnerable to Mr. B.'s assaults: but she is morally inviolate, because it is in her writing and not her body that her moral identity resides. Indeed, it is by reading her letters that Mr. B. is reformed into a suitable husband for Pamela. He puts himself in the position of Pamela's addressee, and is reconstituted morally by that relationship, to the point where he is capable of taking her father's place as Pamela's defining other, as her husband as well as her reader. Letter-writing, in *Pamela*, does not only *report* human relationships, it *constitutes* human relationships, and the moral identity of those who read and write.

Clarissa Harlowe too writes to maintain her moral autonomy, but the correspondence in which she does this is not with a parent or parent-substitute but with another young unmarried woman.²² Her parents, in fact, are precisely the moral threat that her correspondence keeps at bay. Where Pamela maintains one identity available to her in a patriarchal society, that of dutiful daughter, as a defence against another, that of rich man's mistress, Clarissa must maintain an identity outside patriarchy altogether. She is able to do this because she does not have to accept the assumptions and priorities of her family as the only ones possible. She shares an alternative set of values with Anna, and while they frequently disagree over the precise meaning of a word or an event, it is within a correspondence that assumes those values that they negotiate what that meaning is. They construct their own identities, their own reality, by each defining and redefining the other in a continuing dialogue. For example, Anna replies to Clarissa's description of the Harlowe's favoured suitor for her, Mr Solmes, with a redescription of her own in even harsher terms. Anna's mother tells her to tone it down somewhat:

But excuse me, my good mamma! I would not have the character lost upon any consideration, since my vein ran freely into it; and I never wrote to please myself but I pleased you. A very good reason why -- we have but

²² Interestingly, it is once she is engaged to Mr. B. that Pamela notices the lack of a female confidante: "... I have no kind friend of my own sex, to communicate my foolish thoughts to, and to be strengthened by her advice: and then left to myself. What a weak silly creature am I!" (Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* [1740; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980] 366). It is not clear if Pamela counts herself weak and silly because she does not enjoy such a strengthening friendship, which ideally she would enjoy, or because she *needs* one, which ideally she could do without.

one mind between us -- only, that sometimes you are a little too grave, methinks; I, no doubt, a little too flippant in your opinion.²³

This interchangability of their respective subjectivities does not mean that they invariably make the same judgements, but rather that the judgements that they do make, including their perceptions of themselves, take shape in reply to the judgements and perceptions of the other. Their subjectivities are not independent entities but exist only in dialogue with the other. And the terms on which that dialogue is conducted are always open to revision as Clarissa's relationship with her family is not. She replies to Anna's criticisms of the Harlowes in the letter quoted above:

Then you have so very strong a manner of expression where you take a distaste, that when passion has subsided and I come by reflection to see by *your* severity what I have given occasion for I cannot help condemning myself. Let me then, as matters arise, make my complaints to you; but be it your part to soothe and soften my angry passions by such advice as nobody better knows how to give: and this the rather, as you know what an influence your advice has upon me.²⁴

The meaning of Clarissa's words only becomes apparent in Anna's reply to them, and Clarissa's sense of her moral self is thus dependent on Anna's reply too. Clarissa's letters are shaped by her anticipation of how Anna is likely to read them, and this anticipation is revised in the light of the letters that Anna actually writes, so that the reality that is reported in their letters

²³ Richardson, *Clarissa* letter 27, 131.

²⁴ Richardson, *Clarissa* letter 28, 134.

is the result of an intersubjective dialogue.²⁵ Christine Marsden Gillis writes of this exchange:

The letter in reply allows the original letter writer to recognize what in herself she has not seen before. The entertained party is a reflector, a source of self-knowledge to the writer.²⁶

But where the "original" letter is itself a reply, where that which is reflected is itself a reflection, the correspondence is less a source of self-*knowledge* as of self-*definition*, of self-*invention*. Ruth Perry edges towards this fact when she writes that in epistolary fiction in general, "writing letters is a way of at least showing oneself with another, and perhaps even creating a version of the self for that occasion."²⁷ In *Clarissa*, there is no *perhaps* about it. It is only when Lovelace begins intercepting and forging these letters that this mutual definition on the part of the young women is dangerously weakened:

Clarissa tells her own story, describing excellence in action, but it is Anna as correspondent who prompts the description and encourages it. As the women's correspondence becomes attenuated, Clarissa's story grows less clear, falling into allegory and incoherence. She needs the image of

²⁵ One of Clarissa's difficulties lies in her unwillingness to embrace absolutely the moral autonomy her correspondence with Anna in fact gives her. She tends to look over her shoulder, as it were, at what other people apart from Anna might think. Thus, in the letter quoted above, she goes on to censure Anna's portrait of Solmes: "Perhaps it may be thought that I should say the less on this particular subject, because your dislike to him arises from love to me: but should it not be our aim to judge of ourselves, and of everything that affects us, as we may reasonably imagine other people would judge of us and our actions?" (letter 28, 134). This perhaps replaces her relationship with Anna after her rape as her primary mode of self-definition, when her concern becomes for the judgement of posterity rather than of her friend: see note 30 below.

²⁶ Christina Marsden Gillis, *The Paradox of Privacy: Epistolary Form in Clarissa* (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1984) 108.

²⁷ Ruth Perry, *Women, Letters, and the Novel* (New York: AMS Press, 1980) 135.

herself in Anna's writing to continue her own recreation. Divorced from this image, the conflict overwhelms, for it is in this correspondence alone that her female autonomy is respected. Separated from Anna's prose and her own self-creating response, the woman is raped into a daughter and wife.²⁸

That a young servant-woman should define herself morally first with regard to her impoverished parents, and then to her husband once he proves himself worthy, may have questioned the class-politics of Richardson's time: that a young woman of any class should define herself morally with regard to another young woman, in opposition to both family and suitors, questioned its gender-politics, and had even greater consequences on the female novelists of the last decades of the century. Richardson was not the first to write an epistolary novel around a female-female correspondence, and several critics have drawn (albeit brief) attention to his debt to earlier women

²⁸ Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980) 47. I say "dangerously weakened" rather than "destroyed," for in one sense Clarissa's relation to Anna remains definitive of her for at least some time even after her rape. Todd herself notes how, in the first of the post-rape fragments, after Clarissa has said that she is "no longer what I was in any one thing", she nevertheless signs off, "I am still, and I ever will be, *Your true* --" (p.890). "She gives herself no name for she is no longer Clarissa Harlowe, but she exists still in her truth to Anna. Later she is less sure of this . . ." (Todd 53). But though her relation to Anna changes, the importance of writing remains. Gillis says of Clarissa's incoherent writings after her rape: "They have no addressee . . . These are purely private statements . . . Yet, though raped and in one sense broken, Clarissa still writes. That is the important point. Writing sustains existence and affirms existence; these papers are Clarissa, indicating that though the body has been invaded, the moral core has not been altered" (Gillis 53). It may be, as Todd suggests, that Clarissa's later writing constructs an identity in relation to death rather than to her friend (Todd 14 and *passim*); for a discussion of this "elegaic" aspect of Clarissa's writing, see Linda S. Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986) chapter 4.

writers to balance the wide acknowledgment of his influence on later ones.²⁹

Richardson himself was following a long tradition of epistolary fiction, much of it written by women, and his achievement owed much to cultural definitions of feminine writing and to the traditions established by women writers . . . [Women writers were influenced by Richardson's novels, especially *Sir Charles Grandison*] but they were not thereby cut off from the women's tradition before them, which continued to exercise its influence both directly, and indirectly through Richardson. Richardson's importance for women novelists was not so much that he provided them with a model to imitate, as that he helped to create the climate in which they would be accepted.³⁰

That acceptance was conditional, however, and one of the conditions was that female novelists should not follow the example set by Richardson's epistolary novel in conspicuously deploying an autonomous feminine discourse. It is on this, purely

²⁹ Margaret Ann Doody, for example, mentions Elizabeth Rowe's *Letters Moral and Entertaining* (1731?), where "the correspondence between the grave Emilia and her friend, the light-hearted Leticia, foreshadows Richardson's use of Anna Howe and Charlotte Grandison as confidantes of Clarissa and Harriet" (*A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974] 23), but locates the originals for such pairings much more firmly in Restoration and contemporary comedy (287 and *passim*). Of the nine stories spanning the period 1678 - 1740 reprinted in Natascha Würzbach (ed.), *The Novel in Letters: Epistolary Fiction in the Early English Novel, 1678-1740* (London: R.K.P., 1969) three are largely or wholly addressed by women to women. In the female-male correspondence of Mary Davys' *Familiar Letters betwixt a Gentleman and a Lady* (1725) we find Berina, noted by Gillis as a precursor of Richardson's "Facetious young Lady" in *Familiar Letters* (Gillis 107) and thus of Anna and Charlotte (see Doody 29). Of the novelty of *Clarissa*, Doody writes, ". . . the ironic conception of the tragedy demanded some innovation in epistolary technique. For instance, the position of the heroine's female confidante had already been established in novels, both those told in letters and those told in the first person. In most epistolary amatory novels, however, in which writing to the moment is of importance, the correspondence is between the hero and the heroine" (Doody 129-130).

³⁰ Spencer 89. Similarly, Doody notes that all three of Richardson's novels were "not an innovation but a development, by an artistic genius, of a minor tradition established by the writers of love stories told in the feminine voice" (Doody 24).

negative influence of Richardson's on the domestic novel, that I am interested here.

Burney: *Evelina*

That Frances Burney's first novel, *Evelina*, marks the beginning of the feminine domestic novel as a genre has already been noted. That it is a novel in letters is not surprising, given the popularity of the form at the time. What is most significant for the history of the novel is the use to which that epistolary form is put. For the great majority of *Evelina* Anville's letters are addressed not to a young female confidante but to an ageing father-figure, the Rev. Mr. Villars, and her use of them to maintain her moral identity in her traumatic first visits to London and to the spas around Bristol recalls *Pamela* rather than either *Clarissa* or *Sir Charles Grandison*. Burney in *Evelina* rejects the autonomous feminine correspondence made available by Richardson as a basis for her heroine's self-understanding.

Indeed, as Jane Spencer points out, *Evelina* belongs in a tradition of novels by women about the reformation by a lover-mentor of a thoughtless young lady who makes a series of blunders on her first entry into society but ends up in happy marriage to her moral guardian. This is a tradition that pre-dates Richardson and on which he drew.³¹ Burney develops this

³¹ Spencer comments of Burney and Austen, "Their pictures of the minutiae of domestic life drew on *Sir Charles Grandison*, their ironic narrative voice on Fielding's novels. However, in the development of this key character-type -- the mistaken heroine who reforms -- they were

"reformed coquet" tradition by splitting the functions of mentor and lover between two men, Villars and Lord Orville. At the same time she establishes their moral equivalence in Evelina's comparisons of the two in her letters, a use of epistolarity reminiscent of the transformation of Mr. B. through Pamela's letters home into a substitute father-figure for her. Mr. Villars is for most of the novel the heroine's moral touchstone:

Unable as I am to act for myself, or to judge what conduct I ought to pursue, how grateful do I feel myself, that I have such a guide and director to counsel and instruct me as yourself!³²

Like Pamela's parents, however, his advice can never be more than general, isolated as he is from the social whirl of London and the fashionable resorts in which Evelina's dilemmas arise, just as the Andrews are ignorant of the internal politics of a country house. Hence the appearance of Lord Orville as Evelina's ideal moral guardian, combining the affection and refined moral sensibility of Villars with a necessary knowledge of the ways of the world. Villars tells her on her second visit to London that she now "must learn not only to *judge* but to *act* for yourself",³³ but Lord Orville comes forward to take Villars' place instead. Evelina complains to Orville of Villars' absence in one of her crises at Clifton:

following a tradition begun by women and almost exclusive to them . . . Richardson . . . created mistaken but reform-worthy female characters in Anna Howe and Charlotte Grandison, but he did not make them the focus of his plots" (Spencer 141).

³² Fanny Burney, *Evelina, or the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World* (1778; Oxford: O.U.P., 1968) volume II, letter vi, p.160.

³³ Burney, *Evelina* II.viii.164.

"-- but he is too distant, now, to be applied to at the moment I want his aid; -- and *here*, -- there is not a human being whose counsel I can ask!"

"Would to Heaven," cried he, with a countenance from which all coldness and gravity were banished, and succeeded by the mildest benevolence, "that *I* were worthy, -- and capable, -- of supplying the place of such a friend to Miss Anville!"³⁴

Earlier she makes an explicit comparison between the two men. On her return to Villars' house after her second London trip she writes:

Never do I wish to be again separated from him . . . Once, indeed, I thought there existed another, -- who, when *time had wintered o'er his locks*, would have shone forth among his fellow-creatures, with the same brightness of worth which dignifies my honoured Mr. Villars . . .³⁵

This other is of course Lord Orville, and the temporary alienation from him which prompts the letter last quoted is one of the central complications of *Evelina's* plot. After a series of encounters with Orville on her first visit to London, Evelina meets him on her return there in the company of her distant and vulgar relatives, the Branghtons, and two women who are, unknown to her, prostitutes. She is anxious to avoid a similar humiliation when she and the Branghtons are caught out in a rainstorm in Kensington Gardens. Orville's coach is standing at their place of shelter, and she lets slip that she knows him: this is enough for her relatives to use her name to borrow the coach to get home, in the course of which journey it is seriously damaged. She takes the bold step of writing to Lord Orville to apologize. The reply she receives is in shockingly forward terms, however,

³⁴ Burney, *Evelina* III.v.306-7.

³⁵ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxviii.260-1.

and presumes that her apology was an excuse to open an amorous correspondence. It emerges much later in the novel (in volume III, letter xvi) that this reply was forged by Sir Clement Willoughby, who is pursuing Evelina with no thought of marriage, and who had intercepted her original letter, but it is enough to shatter her image of Orville as a moral paragon.

This alienation from Orville has interesting effects on the novel's epistolary structure. I have written that *Evelina* returns to the pupil-mentor mode of epistolary narration, rejecting the sentimental female correspondence of *Clarissa* or *Sir Charles Grandison*. This is in general true, but at this point in the text, where its heroine has been tricked into unjustified disillusionment with her destined husband, Evelina turns to a female confidante, Maria Mirvan. Maria is a light-hearted foil to her serious friend rather as Anna Howe is to Clarissa, although we can only infer this from Evelina's letters as none of Maria's are included. Maria accompanied Evelina on her first visit to the capital, but is absent from the second and thus made available as an alternative confidante to Villars. The different terms on which the two correspondences are maintained can be gathered from two letters written on consecutive days on Evelina's second arrival in London. To Mr. Villars she writes of Mme. Duval's plan to take her to Paris:

I started at this intimation, which very much surprised me. But I am very glad she has discovered her intention, as I shall be carefully upon my guard not to venture from town with her.³⁶

³⁶ Burney, *Evelina* II.ix.166.

Her letters to Villars describe her attempts to put his prudential principles into practice. Her letter to Maria has other preoccupations:

Tell me, my dear Maria, do you never re-trace in your memory the time we past here when together? to mine, it recurs for ever! And yet, I think I rather recollect a dream, or some visionary fancy, than a reality. -- That I should ever have been known to Lord Orville, -- that I should have spoken to -- have danced with him, -- seems now a romantic illusion: and that elegant politeness, that flattering attention, that high-bred delicacy, which so much distinguished him above all other men, and which struck us with such admiration, I now re-trace the remembrance of, rather as belonging to an object of ideal perfection, formed by my own imagination, than to a being of the same race and nature as those with whom I at present converse.³⁷

Where her letters to Villars are concerned with the rights and wrongs of social intercourse, her letter to Maria redescribes what really happened in terms of illusion, of imagination, of fiction. Events are reconstructed as dream, a realm beyond questions of truth and falsehood, let alone right and wrong. This is the only letter to Maria that is included in the discourse of the novel until the crisis of Orville's reply, although in the story the correspondence is maintained in the intervening days. Its inclusion is necessary because, it seems, Evelina is unwilling to discuss what has obviously been an erotic attraction to Orville in letters to her mentor, when the truth of such an attraction can be teased out in her letters to Maria just as Anna teases out the truth of Clarissa's feelings for Lovelace.³⁸ Hence her hesitation to

³⁷ Burney, *Evelina* II.x.172.

³⁸ "I must own myself somewhat distressed how to answer your raillery: yet believe me, my dear Maria, your suggestions are those of *fancy*, not of *truth*. I am unconscious of the weakness you suspect . . ." (Burney, *Evelina* II.xxviii.259).

tell Villars about her letter to Orville, when she does not hesitate to tell Maria (in another letter that is not included in the text):

Will you forgive me, if I own that I have *first* written an account of this transaction to Miss Mirvan? -- and that I even thought of *concealing* it from you? -- Short-lived, however, was the ungrateful idea, and sooner will I risk the justice of your displeasure, than unworthily betray your generous confidence.³⁹

After she receives the forged reply to this apology, she at first avoids telling Villars of the collapse of her secret hopes. Only the terms upon which she writes to Maria demand that her feelings be written at all: "... my first determination was to confine my chagrin totally to my own bosom; but your friendly enquiries have drawn it from me ..."⁴⁰ Eventually she confesses her disappointment to Villars, and she can once again be completely open with *both* her correspondents: "To you, *and* to Mr. Villars, I vow an unremitting confidence" (my emphasis).⁴¹ This promise closes letter XXIX in volume II; letter XXX is her first from Bristol, and she promises to maintain the correspondence, but it is the last letter to Maria that the reader is given. In volume III, the only letters needed to tell Evelina's story are those to the paternal Villars.

This should not come as a surprise. Even in her letters to Maria, Burney is careful to signal that this friendship is no

³⁹ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxiii.249.

⁴⁰ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxvii.258.

⁴¹ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxix.268. Indeed, Orville at times is described by Evelina as a substitute for Maria as well as for Villars: "As a sister I loved him, -- I could have entrusted him with every thought of my heart, had he deigned to wish my confidence; so steady did I think his honour, so *feminine* his delicacy, and so amiable his nature!" (Burney, *Evelina* II.xxviii.261).

substitute for Evelina's self-defining relationships with the two father-figures in her life. Falling between these relationships because of the forged letter, she loses grip on a moral identity that her correspondence with Maria cannot provide. Discussing her mixed feelings on being asked home by Villars from London, she writes, "I believe you would hardly have known me; -- indeed, I hardly know myself." But she continues:

Perhaps had I first seen *you*, in your kind and sympathizing bosom I might have ventured to have reposed every secret of my soul; and then -- but let me pursue my journal.⁴²

"And then -- " -- what? The way in which Evelina breaks off here is a taste of what is to come at the end of this letter, where her discourse fragments and contradicts itself.

O Miss Mirvan, to be so beloved of the best of men, -- should I not be happy? -- Should I have one wish save that of meriting his goodness? -- Yet think me not ungrateful; indeed I am not, although the internal sadness of my mind unfits me, at present, for enjoying as I ought the bounties of providence.

I cannot journalise; cannot arrange my ideas into any order.

How little situation has to do with happiness! I had flattered myself that, when restored to Berry Hill, I should be restored to tranquility: far otherwise have I found it, for never yet had tranquility and Evelina so little intercourse.

I blush for what I have written. Can you, Maria, forgive my gravity? but I restrain it so much and so painfully in the presence of Mr. Villars, that I know not how to deny myself the consolation of indulging it to you.

Adieu, my dear Miss Mirvan.

Yet one thing I must add; do not let the seriousness of this letter deceive you; do not impute to a wrong cause the melancholy I confess, by supposing that the heart of your friend mourns a too great susceptibility; no, indeed! believe me it never was, never can be, more assuredly her own than at this moment.⁴³

⁴² Burney, *Evelina* II.xxvi.254.

⁴³ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxvi.255. Evelina's blush here suggests that her own writing, not Maria's, awakens her to the reality of her physical desire: it is the same response that follows her realization of the implications of the

Her disappointment in Orville threatens her correspondence with Maria, as well as with Villars, although in a different way. Their relationship does not generate moral identities autonomous from the laws of men: in this letter Evelina tries to write in a state of mental alienation from *any* male mentor, Orville or Villars, and the attempt breaks down. The possibility of an autonomous feminine moral identity is hinted at (it is what should follow Evelina's "and then -- ") but ultimately rejected.⁴⁴

Ultimately rejected, but not simply rejected, however. For if Evelina behaved entirely with the prudence advocated by Villars, it is hard to see how she could ever find a husband at all. The letter of Evelina's in which Orville declares his desire to take Villar's place, a declaration which makes her "the happiest of human beings" (volume III, letter v), is replied to by Villars with the demand that she leave Orville's company and return home.

forged letter: "But this dream was soon over, and I awoke to far different feelings; upon a second reading, I thought every word changed, -- it did not seem the same letter,-- I could not find one sentence that I could look at without blushing . . ." (Burney, *Evelina* II.xxvii.257).

⁴⁴ Evelina's "and then -- " is in this way the exact equivalent of Pamela's complaint, at the point where she is about to swap one father-figure for another, that she lacks a female confidante: see above, note 22, page 99. Julia Epstein comments, "[T]here is a second novel here, over which *Evelina* rests like a palimpsest: the novel that Evelina's letters and conversations with a peer, another young woman, would comprise" (Julia Epstein, *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing* [Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989] 102). The function of the letters to Maria, according to Epstein, are to demonstrate by way of contrast the limitations of the letters to Villars, prompting the reader to examine the ways in which Evelina edits her experience to manipulate her mentor therein. But this hardly explains why the letters to Maria should appear and disappear when they do. Burney suggests that Evelina *could* maintain an identity independent from her mentors, yes, but also suggests that such an autonomy would be morally and psychically dangerous for her. Epstein misses the extent to which the effort that Evelina puts into her letters to Villars is less to shape his reactions and maintain his approval as to shape and maintain her own identity in her relationship to him as her mentor: a relationship whose moral priority over others *Evelina* does nothing to question. It suggests an alternative novel only in order to reject it.

To convince her of the necessity of this, he redescribes her story up to that point, repeating her own phrases back to her in a new discursive context:

Your first meeting with Lord Orville was decisive . . . Young, animated, entirely off your guard, and thoughtless of consequences, *imagination* took the reins, and *reason*, slow-paced, though sure-footed, was unequal to a race with so eccentric and flighty a companion. How flighty was my Evelina's progress through those regions of fancy and passion whither her new guide conducted her! -- She saw Lord Orville at a ball, -- and he was *the most amiable of men!* -- She met him again at another, -- and *he had every virtue under Heaven!*

. . . your new comrade [imagination] had not patience to wait any trial; her glowing pencil, dipt in the vivid colours of her creative ideas, painted to you, at the moment of your first acquaintance, all the excellencies, all the good and rare qualities, which a great length of time, and intimacy, could alone really have discovered.⁴⁵

Evelina delays, and her reward is marriage to Orville. What is more, the novel leaves us in no doubt that Orville really does have "every virtue under Heaven": Evelina's early judgements are proved correct. Villars' prudence and morality do not allow for the leap of faith, of sympathetic imagination, that constitutes falling in love. Evelina's experience of love for Orville goes beyond anything that Villars is competent to judge.

What is striking about the passage quoted above, however, is the way in which it redeploys as derogatory terms the vocabulary in which Evelina had described her adventures in her letters, not to Villars, but to Maria. The world of "fancy", of "imagination", of reality recast as illusion, was constructed in the novel's feminine correspondence, however briefly presented, not in its ethical-educational one. Villars unwittingly identifies for us a condition for the success of Evelina's love-affair with Orville:

⁴⁵Burney, *Evelina* III.vi.308-9.

namely, that she be capable of responding to events as an imaginative being as well as a moral agent. And that capacity is fostered and displayed in her relationship with Maria, not with him.

While Burney refuses to allow Evelina a sense of right and wrong autonomous from her father-figures, then, she makes an autonomous feminine creativity, a capacity on the part of women to invent their own alternative reality, essential to the happy outcome of her plot. But this necessity is quietly implied, where the ethical dependence of the heroine on her mentor is asserted on almost every page.

Burney: *Cecilia*

Before considering why this should be so, it is worth examining Burney's next novel, which abandons epistolary form and yet repeats many of *Evelina*'s concerns within its third-person narrative. Cecilia Beverley too takes her leave of a male guardian to brave the perils of London society, and he too provides a moral touchstone by redescribing her experience for her, opening up meanings in past events which she was not aware of at the time.⁴⁶ However, unlike Mr. Villars', Mr. Monckton's advice is not disinterested, and Burney is enabled by her use of an omniscient narrator to warn the reader right from

⁴⁶ For examples of such redescriptions, see Fanny Burney, *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782; Oxford: O.U.P., 1988) book II, chapter vii, p.164; III.iii.197; IV.iii.254; V.vii.369-70; V.xiii.435-6.

the start that "... to faculties the most skilful of investigating the character of every other" Monckton added "a dissimulation the most profound in concealing his own."⁴⁷ Cecilia turns to him at her departure:

"... I hope, sir, you will honour me with your counsel and admonitions with respect to my future conduct, whenever you have the goodness to let me see you."

This was precisely his wish. He begged, in return, that she would treat him with confidence, and then suffered the chaise to drive off.⁴⁸

We know Monckton's wish as Cecilia does not, and it is to marry her. But Monckton has already married an old dowager for her wealth, under the mistaken impression that she had not long to live, and so he endeavours to keep Cecilia single until his wife dies. He soon realizes he has a rival, the young Mr. Delvile, who exemplifies the domestic virtues as perfectly as Monckton exemplifies their abandonment. Delvile's mother describes him as "Formed for domestic happiness" (a recommendation of the hero that we have already seen repeated in Edgeworth and Scott), and Cecilia recognizes him as one "whose turn of mind, so similar to her own, promised her the highest domestic felicity".⁴⁹

Monckton enjoys instead a life of fashionable pleasure:

Having thus sacrificed to ambition all possibility of happiness in domestic life, he turned his thoughts to those other methods of procuring it, which he had so dearly purchased the power of essaying . . . The little knowledge

⁴⁷ Burney, *Cecilia* I.i.7. It is perhaps, as Julia Epstein suggests, an exaggeration to describe Villars as totally disinterested in his advice to Evelina: see Epstein 104-5.

⁴⁸ Burney, *Cecilia* I.ii.19.

⁴⁹ Burney, *Cecilia* VI.viii.500; VI.x.520.

of fashionable manners and of the characters of the times of which Cecilia was yet mistress, she had gathered at the house of this gentleman . . .⁵⁰

Monckton tries to use his position of mentor to lower Evelina's opinion of Delvile and his family; when this does not work, and the two lovers plan a secret wedding, he makes use of the information she has confided in him to prevent it happening. Cecilia is traumatized with doubt at the thought of elopement:

"Where can I, " cried Cecilia, "find a friend, who, in this critical moment will instruct me how to act!"

"You will find one," answered he [Delvile], "in your own bosom . . ."51

Her own judgement is not enough for her, any more than it was for Evelina, and Cecilia chooses Monckton as that "male confident who might be entrusted with their project", with disastrous results.⁵²

Cecilia's problem is in part the loss of a *female* confidante to whom she could talk or write. She first stays in London with an old friend, now Mrs. Harrel, with whom she was at school, "when books were their first amusement, and the society of each other was their chief happiness," but who has been swept up in the fashionable and financially ruinous vacuity of her husband.⁵³ Mr. Harrel indeed blackmails Cecilia into "lending" him all the money she was left by her father (he shoots himself before it can be repaid) and staves off bankruptcy yet further with money raised

⁵⁰ Burney, *Cecilia* I.i.8.

⁵¹ Burney, *Cecilia* VII.vi.572.

⁵² Burney, *Cecilia* VII.vi.574.

⁵³ Burney, *Cecilia* I.iv.32.

from a friend, Sir Robert Floyer, on the promise that he can marry Cecilia in return. An alternative friend of her own age appears in Henrietta Belfield, but this friendship is crippled on the one hand by Henrietta's vulgar mother, who is sure that Cecilia is visiting for the sake of her son, and on the other by Henrietta's infatuation with young Delvile. She cannot tell Henrietta about the second, completed, marriage ceremony; soon after, the truth about Monckton's hypocrisy emerges, and Delvile shoots him in a duel.

She told her not what had passed; that, she knew, would be a fruitless affliction to her: but she was soothed by her gentleness, and her conversation was some security from the dangerous rambling of her ideas.⁵⁴

The weight of events thus piling up indeed eventually sends Cecilia into temporary insanity. As in *Evelina*, a female confidante is valuable but no substitute for her male equivalent: talking or writing to her is a comfort in crisis, but full confidence is prevented by the heroine's relationship to men, on which her female friendship is conditional. It is when her relationship to her mentors is in crisis that both Cecilia's speech to Henrietta as reported here, and *Evelina's* writing to Maria as given us in volume II, letter xxvi, are threatened with disintegration. The heroine's identity remains tied up with her father-figures in both novels: a solution to her crisis lies in reconciliation to the patriarchs. Cecilia's madness finally ends her trials by shaming Delvile's father into recognition of her as his daughter.

⁵⁴ Burney, *Cecilia* X.ii.851.

Cecilia nevertheless includes some of that feminine creativity that we saw implied in *Evelina*'s letters to Maria. It does so in the shape of Lady Honoria Pemberton, with whom *Cecilia* talks during a stay at Delville Castle. It is a melancholy place that Lady Honoria hates:

"... Even if by chance one has the good fortune to hear any intelligence, Mrs. Delville will hardly let it be repeated, for fear that it should happen to be untrue, as if that could possibly signify! I am sure I had as lieve the things were false as not, for they tell as well one way as the other, if she would but have patience to hear them."⁵⁵

She goes on to repeat the most ludicrous gossip concerning *Cecilia* and young Delville, including that he meant to marry her sister Euphrasia, and that he meant to marry *Cecilia*, gossip at which *Cecilia* learns to laugh:

"For shame, Lady Honoria!" said *Cecilia*, again changing colour, "I am sure this must be your own fancy, -- invention, --"

"No, I assure you; I heard it at several places . . . others said you had promised your hand to Sir Robert Floyer, and repented when you heard of his mortgages, and he gave it out every where that he would fight any man that pretended to you; and then again some said that you were all the time privately married to Mr. Arnott, but did not dare own it, because he was so afraid of fighting with Sir Robert."

"O Lady Honoria!" cried *Cecilia*, half laughing, "what wild inventions are these! and all I hope, your own?"

"No, indeed, they were current over the whole town. But don't take any notice of what I told you about Euphrasia, for perhaps, it may never happen."

"Perhaps," said *Cecilia*, reviving by believing it all fiction, "it has never been in agitation?"⁵⁶

As in *Evelina*, the female voice gives a privileged place to invention, to *fancy*, in mediating male-female relations. Note the

⁵⁵ Burney, *Cecilia* VI.iv.466.

⁵⁶ Burney, *Cecilia* VI.iv.467-8.

contrast with Mr. Harrel's deal with Sir Robert: Harrel's assurances to his friend that Evelina would marry him were classifiable as simple lies, and lies motivated by selfishness at that. Lady Honoria's repetition of the same story falls into a different category altogether. Here, the question of truth and falsity is simply suspended, and she speaks from the pure pleasure of story-telling. Lady Honoria's speech, in short, is *fiction*.

Now, Lady Honoria is ostensibly part of that world of cruel vacuity that Cecilia must learn to reject for the pleasures of domesticity: she is a woman of fashion, whom Mrs. Delvile accuses of "a saucy indifference whom she pleases or hurts, that borders upon what in a woman is of all things the most odious, a daring defiance of the world and its opinions."⁵⁷ The first part of this accusation would clearly carry weight with Cecilia, who shows sensitivity in all things. But Cecilia is nearly paralysed with concern for "the world and its opinions", and when marrying Delvile, which alone can make her happy, requires and lacks some of Lady Honoria's defiance. Lady Honoria does not need a father-figure, in the shape of a husband or anything else. Cecilia replies to Honoria's confidence that husbands can be easily brought into line after marriage, by saying that she would rather marry a tutor than a pupil. Honoria answers, "One has enough to do with tutors beforehand, and the best thing I know of marrying is to get rid of them. I fancy you think so too, only it's a pretty speech to make."⁵⁸ The presumption that Cecilia's talk too is a

⁵⁷ Burney, *Cecilia* VI.viii.

⁵⁸ Burney, *Cecilia* VI.iv.466.

pretty fiction is typical of her character. The rejection of mentors, given what we know (and Cecilia, at this stage, still doesn't) of Monckton's duplicity, strikes a chord with the whole action of the novel.

Lady Honoria does not make a decisive intervention in that action, but her attitude to the Delvilles is one that the text as a whole supports.⁵⁹ *Cecilia* does not advocate the abject submission of the single woman to her father-figures. Katherine Sobba Green notes how young Delvile's father is forced into acknowledging Cecilia's personal worth, despite her defiance of his wishes and loss of fortune, and "suffers a substantial loss of power when he receives Cecilia into his London house."⁶⁰ Dr. Lyster, the Delvile's physician, who is in many ways the male confidant that Cecilia should have had but did not, assures her that her ordeal has resulted not from her own actions but from patriarchal "pride and prejudice."

Further, with Cecilia sitting primly beside her, Lady Honoria, Delvile's irrepressible niece, sabotages and disrupts her uncle's solemnity with various attacks against male prerogative.⁶¹

⁵⁹ When Delvile decides he must renounce his love for Cecilia for the sake of the family name, Honoria sends his dog to Cecilia. Delvile turns up to find her in the act of sending it back, bidding it farewell in terms of her love for its master (Burney, *Cecilia* VII.iii). It is the first time he has heard her make such a declaration, and he finds his love for her outweighs any family objections. But in such a long novel, there are many necessary but insufficient conditions that must be fulfilled before the hero and heroine can be happily married, and Honoria's scheme with the dog is only one.

⁶⁰ Green 89.

⁶¹ Green 89. Epstein too recognizes the example of autonomy that Lady Honoria represents for Cecilia, but the slight importance she affords Monckton means that she does not place that example in the context of the heroine's relation to her mentor as I do here. See Epstein 167.

Here is one of those attacks:

"... one's fathers, and uncles, and these sort of people, always make connexions for one, and not a creature thinks of our principles, till they find them out by our conduct: and nobody can possibly do that till we are married, for they give us no power beforehand. The men know nothing of us in the world while we are single, but how we can dance a minuet, or play a lesson upon the harpsichord."⁶²

Lady Honoria can only speak thus freely against mentors because she is not a major figure in the text. That the heroine, or the heroine's best friend, in a Burney novel should be thus outspoken is unthinkable. As in *Evelina*, the autonomous female voice is marginalized at the same time as it articulates the core concerns of the novel. It is as if Burney were anxious about a feminine creativity independent of male mentors, as it appears in female-female correspondence or in gossip, in a way that Richardson was not. Why should this be?

Let us continue our comparison of *Evelina* and *Cecilia* in this regard. *Evelina* implies limitations in Villar's advice to his ward by contrasting it with the discourse shared by her and her female friend. In *Cecilia* the mentor-figure is not limited in terms of his experience: he knows everything about the unmarried Cecilia, a dangerous exception to Lady Honoria's rule. His advice is instead downright duplicitous, and as readers we can appreciate this because the omniscient narrator is in a position to tell us as the deluded heroine is not. So when Monckton redescribes some of Cecilia's experiences to her, ostensibly to help Cecilia understand them but in fact to ends of his own, we already have the

⁶² Burney, *Cecilia* X.x.934-5.

narrator's version of events to contrast with his self-interested one. In other words, Monckton and the narrator rival each other as omniscient interpreters of Cecilia's story. The challenge to patriarchy's right to distinguish truth and falsehood, right and wrong, comes not only from a character within the novel (Lady Honoria) or from an autonomous feminine discourse within the novel (Evelina and Maria) but from the narrative discourse itself.

And this is because *the narrative itself is an autonomous feminine discourse*. Burney's anxiety about the feminine creativity of Evelina or of Lady Honoria is an anxiety about *her own* feminine creativity, a fear of openly advocating within her novels the creative autonomy from men that her novel-writing, by a woman and for women, in fact gives her. This is an anxiety that Richardson, as a man, never had. *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, despite their abandonment of Richardson's female-female correspondence as a narrative technique, are themselves pieces of female-female communication.⁶³

Indeed, these novels' narrative strategies are built around the need to deny that autonomy even while they exemplify it: they abandon Richardson's technique *because* they are pieces of female-female communication. Novels written by women for women in the Restoration and the early part of the eighteenth

⁶³ Burney of course expressed great anxiety about the indecorousness of coming into the public eye as a woman, writing famously to one of her own father figures, Samuel Crisp, soon after the success of *Evelina*, "I would a thousand Times rather forfeit my character as a *Writer*, than risk ridicule or censure as a *Female*. I have never set my Heart on Fame, and therefore would not if I *could* purchase it at the expense of all my own ideas of propriety." Lars E. Troide and Stewart J. Cooke, eds., *The Early Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney* Vol. III. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) Letter 72 (c.7 Jan, 1779) 212.

century had been regarded as disreputable. Their authors were seen as committing something close to prostitution in their indecent entrance upon the public stage, and women as a mass market for escapist fiction as a corrupting influence on the publishing trade.⁶⁴ One of the ways that later women novelists gained acceptance and respectability was by absorbing into their work the content of the conduct books, thus presenting themselves in part as useful guides to the behaviour considered proper for young ladies. Novels like Burney's were written for a female readership, and they were ostensibly written to improve.

The portrayal of female friendship in such novels could be put to the same moral end:

Outside the text, sentimental friendship becomes a means of befriending the female reader; through her relationship with her friend, the heroine can display her exemplary state, and under the mask of sentiment, stand as a model for other young ladies who may unwisely yearn to stray.⁶⁵

But there was an obvious danger in the case of friendships such as Clarissa and Anna's, or Harriet and Charlotte's, namely that the reader would take the latter member of each pair, the spirited, independent friend, rather than the moral paragon, as a model. The very autonomy from husbands and father-figures made possible by these friendships was not a good example: for if the feminine novel was to be a guide to the behaviour considered

⁶⁴ The size of the readership for women's fiction seems to have been exaggerated. See Ros Ballaster, *Seductive Forms: Women's Amatory Fiction from 1684 to 1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) chapter 2. Ballaster's book considers Aphra Behn, Delarivier Manley, and Eliza Heywood as early and unrespectable writers of women's fiction; Katherine Sobba Green mentions Jane Barker, Penelope Aubin, and Mary Davys (Green 43).

⁶⁵ Todd 3.

proper for young ladies, that meant considered proper, in the first instance, by *men*:

. . . The question of where *Evelina* gets her advice raises a gender issue . . . that bears complexly on the history of women's novels. For any discussion of the tandem development of women's novels and conduct books, it is crucial to recall that it was only late in the history of conduct literature that the conduct books ostensibly written for women really began serving as a means of *self*-definition for them. By and large, it was men rather than women themselves who advised and, by extension, defined women.⁶⁶

Novelists like Burney, in other words, won their literary authority at the price of preaching a conditional acceptance of patriarchal norms. Women were free to practice fiction, but only if female fictionalizing was warned against in the process. The rise of the feminine novel in the second half of the century was made possible "by purging it of its disreputable associations with female sexuality and the subversive power of female 'wit', or artifice."⁶⁷ The anxiety about the relation of feminine discourse to patriarchal Truth, to the Law of the Father, that we see at work in novels like *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, is the consequence of this paradoxical progress.⁶⁸ The autonomy from a male-governed society seen in female-female correspondence, or in female-

⁶⁶ Green 19-20.

⁶⁷ Ballaster 3. The general abandonment of epistolarity from Burney onwards is thus more than the abandonment of an unnecessarily "cumbersome device" that Doody describes. The letter form "became associated with the courtship tale as Richardson had developed it [especially in *Sir Charles Grandison*] . . . But young ladies could be shown entering society, observing manners, and falling in love, without sustaining themselves by constant sessions of letter-writing, and the novelist could tell their story without recourse to epistles" (Doody 373).

⁶⁸ This anxiety is thus the manifestation at the level of content of what Jane Spencer calls Burney's "internalization of feminine diffidence." In general, Spencer writes, "As women writers' talents were more generally acknowledged they began to claim less for themselves." (Spencer 95).

female dialogue, could suggest that the woman novelist and her readers were generating the same sort of autonomy, their own alternative reality, between themselves. To avoid such a scandalous implication, such correspondence, such dialogue, was bracketed, avoided, or omitted altogether. Yet women continued to write, and women to read their writing, until the novel could be claimed by them as a genre of their own. When Scott comes to image this autonomous feminine creativity, he does so in the correspondence or dialogue of two young ladies, like *Clarissa* and *Anna*, like *Evelina* and *Maria*.

(iii) Scott: the correspondence of Julia Mannering and feminine fiction

Julia Mannering's letters to Matilda Marchmont share with Burney's novels an awareness of the fictional nature of the world that they create. We have already seen an example of this in Julia's distinction between the "distresses of sentiment" discussed in their correspondence and the "actual misfortune" which Lucy Bertram has experienced (II.viii.195). Earlier, after Brown's reappearance on the lake below her window, she writes, "How could you suggest, my dear Matilda, that my feelings . . . rather rose from the warmth of my imagination than of my heart?" (I.xvii.274). "Imagination" (fiction) and "heart" (real feeling) are never clearly distinguishable in Julia's case. Her account of Brown's return flows seamlessly from her imaginative response

to her reading, is mediated by an Eastern song, and culminates in the melodrama of sentimental fiction.

I was deeply engaged with that beautiful scene in the Merchant of Venice, where two lovers, describing the stillness of a summer night, enhance upon each other its charms, and was lost in the associations of story and of feeling which it awakens, when I heard upon the lake the sound of a flageolet . . . At length, I distinguished plainly that little Hindu air which you called my favourite . . . -was it earthly music, or notes passing on the wind to warn me of his death? (I.xvii.275-6)

Lucy's star-crossed love for young Hazlewood she understands in terms of its possibilities as a fictional plot:

And yet, what provokes me is, that the demure monkey actually has a lover of her own, and that their mutual affection (for mutual I take it to be) has a great deal of complicated and romantic interest. (II.viii.126)

This, precisely when Julia's affair with Brown has ceased to have much complicated or romantic interest: "My hopes, my fears, my anxieties about Brown are of a less interesting cast, since I know that he is at liberty, and in health."

As for Julia's reading, that is, as one would expect, primarily of novels.⁶⁹ In the first set of extracts from her letters, however, she contrasts the novel, as read by young ladies of her class, with the oral narratives that she has heard recited in India:

You will call this romantic -- but consider I was born in the land of talisman and spell, and my childhood lulled by tales which you can only enjoy through the gauzy frippery of a French translation . . . No wonder that European fiction sounds cold and meagre, after the wonderul effects

⁶⁹ That Julia's reading is fundamentally novelistic is emphasized by her reaction to Lucy Bertram's education: Sampson has taught her the modern languages (those in which one can read novels) but "she has only, I believe, to thank her own good sense or obstinacy, that the Greek, Latin, (and Hebrew, for ought I know,) were not added to her acquisitions" (II.viii.122).

which I have seen the romances of the East produce upon the hearers.
(I.xvii.267-8)⁷⁰

Julia distinguishes herself from her addressee in terms of their respective experiences of fiction and the different expectations they have therefrom as a result: Julia a listener to Indian stories at first hand, Matilda a reader of their French translations. But the difference between these two discursive embodiments of the same stories is further made in terms of the effect the former have on their listeners. The tales that Julia heard in the East were not simply reports of fictional events, but strongly performative utterances. Her implication is that their power over their hearers partakes of the magical. What Julia calls "romantic" is associated (though not identified outright) at once with fiction, magic and, as in the return of Brown on the lake quoted above, the East. "If India be the land of magic, this, my dearest Matilda, is the country of romance" she later comments, referring to the Lake District (I.xvii.271). This "romance," this performative power of language that Julia saw at work in India, is also present in Julia's letters themselves, if in a less exotic form. Her allusion to the effect of oriental romance on its addressees names the ability of her own correspondence to create its own world, to generate for writer and addressee an autonomy from the patriarchal world around them.

⁷⁰ Note that Lydia and Letty in *Humphry Clinker* also have oriental fiction as a common cultural reference: the former says of London, "All that you read of wealth and grandeur in the Arabian Nights' Entertainment, and the Persian Tales, concerning Bagdad, Diarbekir, Damascus, Ispahan, and Samarkand, is here realized" (Smollett, xxxi.123).

In Julia's case, indeed, autonomy does not seem a strong enough word. Julia's self-understanding in these letters certainly operates along the same two axes as we saw in *Evelina*: between herself and her female correspondent, and between herself and her father-figure. Yet when the second period described by the novel begins, with Mannering's return to Scotland, the alienation between father and daughter is absolute. Mannering has always been a distant parent to Julia, but the events in India have driven them even further apart. As in *Evelina*, the heroine cannot (to begin with) bring herself to tell her paternal guardian her feelings for her young lover. As in *Evelina*, the contrast with the terms on which female friendship is maintained is obvious.

"My father, constantly engaged in military duty, I saw but at rare intervals, and was taught to look up to him with more awe than confidence." (I.xvii.268)

"I have this instant received your letter -- your most welcome letter! -- Thanks, my dearest friend, for your sympathy and your counsels -- I can only repay them with unbounded confidence." (I.xviii.284)

Julia's alienation from her father is an extreme case of a general distance between her and her mentors. Her father's friend Mervyn doesn't understand her either, she says.

". . . I hold that the gentleman has good taste for the female outside, and do not expect he should comprehend my sentiments farther." (I.xvii.273)

Even her relationship to Brown is primarily constructed in her letters to Matilda, to the point where his story becomes a sign of the women's mutual devotion:

" -- But to my tale -- let it be, my friend, the most sacred, as it is the most sincere pledge of our friendship." (I.xvii.274)

Julia's relationship with Brown, in other words, is subordinate to that maintained in her letters to Matilda. Similarly, in the first extract we are given, Julia is ready to turn her father into the hero of a gothic or oriental tale; into the hero, that is, of just the sort of story read by Matilda in French translation:

Do you know there was a murmur, half confirmed too by some mysterious words which dropped from my poor mother, that he possesses other sciences, now lost to the world, which enable the possessor to summon up before him the dark and shadowy forms of future events! . . . - Does it not, my dear Matilda, throw a mysterious grandeur about its possessor? (I.xvii.267)

Guy Mannering, the reader already knows from I.iv.57, abandoned astrology before going to India. The "mystery" Julia sees in him stems not from any hidden romantic depths of his own, but from her simple ignorance of a distant and authoritarian father, and from the story concerning him that she has inherited from her mother.

So taken for granted is this linguistic autonomy of Julia's from their plans that her expressions of submission to her mentors are understood not as reporting her state of mind (which it is presumed is *not* submissive) but as placing herself in a role which will make life easier under their rule. "Miss Mannering acquiesced with a passiveness which is no part of her character, and which, to tell you the plain truth, is a feature about the

business which I like least of all" writes Mervyn (I.xvi.261).

Mannering is similarly suspicious:

"O, there is a little too much of this universal spirit of submission; an excellent disposition in action, but your constantly repeating the jargon of it puts me in mind of the eternal salams of our black dependants in the East." (I.xviii.293)

Indeed, one of the things shared by the general narrator and Mannering, Pleydell and Mervyn is precisely their recognition of this autonomous feminine discourse. When Mannering tells her, "You have a genius for friendship, that is, for running up intimacies which you call such . . ." he is recognizing the performative force of Julia's letters to Matilda, the fact that the correspondence's primary function is to generate that friendship, and not to describe events (I.xviii.294). Mervyn writes to Mannering, concerning the colony of poets and artists across the lake from his house,

". . . were Julia my daughter, it is one of those sort of fellows that I should fear on her account. She is generous and romantic, and writes six sheets a-week to a female correspondent; and it's a sad thing to lack a subject in such a case, either for exercise of the feelings or of the pen." (I.xvi.263)

And this serves by way of introduction to the first batch of extracts from that correspondence in the chapter immediately following. As I have noted, the exercise of the feelings and the pen, of the "heart" and the "imagination", are indeed not always easily distinguishable in Julia's letters. But the claim here is more generally, that her discourse describes events which have not occurred independently of that discourse, but are rather a result

of the demands of the discourse itself. Julia's discourse does not report an external reality, it constructs its own.⁷¹

This is precisely the accusation (and accusation it is in this case) levelled by the narrator at the beginning of the second chapter of Julia's letters at Julia's mother,

... who called her husband in her heart a tyrant until she feared him as such, and read romances until she became so enamoured of the complicated intrigues which they contain, as to assume the management of a little family novel of her own, and constitute her daughter, a girl of sixteen, the principal heroine. (I.xviii.279)⁷²

I have already noted Julia's inheritance from her mother of a romantic image of that husband, but she has also inherited a general tendency to fictionalizing. Once settled with her father in Scotland, Julia is tempted to create some "complicated intrigues", to write a "family novel", herself. In her first letter to Matilda from Woodbourne, she describes teasing Hazlewood into paying her more attention than Lucy,

⁷¹ Julia's perspective is thus not one that can be integrated into the realist consensus as described by Elizabeth Ermarth. The following is a good description of the ultimate congruence between the narrator of this novel and *Manning*, Mervyn and Pleydell, but not of the relation between Julia and the narrator while she retains her discursive autonomy: "[T]he narrator's awareness is merely a potentiality of consciousness as derived from the various individual viewpoints that constitute it, including those of the characters; it is implicitly the future extension of the characters' own powers of insight and projection" (*Realism and Consensus* 71). Julia's viewpoint is not one that can be assimilated to the narrator's, precisely because she does not share his objective attitude to a shared reality.

⁷² This continuity between mother and daughter is recognized by Julia herself: " -- But peace be with her ashes -- her actions were guided by the heart rather than the head; and shall her daughter, who inherits all her weakness, be the first to withdraw the veil from her defects?" (I.xvii.270). The male characters, especially Mervyn, more usually count Julia's weaknesses as things she has in common with her *father*.

" -- when, behold, in the midst of our lively conversation, a very soft sigh from Miss Lucy reached my not ungratified ears. I was greatly too generous to prosecute my victory any farther, even if I had not been afraid of papa. Luckily for me he had at that moment got into a long description of the peculiar notions and manners of a certain tribe of Indians, who live far up the country, and was illustrating them by making drawings on Miss Bertram's work-patterns, three of which he utterly damaged, by introducing among the intricacies of the pattern his specimens of oriental costume." (II.viii.128-9)⁷³

So she gets Lucy and her lover talking again, and turns her attentions to her father, hinting that he might be thinking of marrying Lucy himself. This line of "coquetry" (II.viii.129) he immediately silences.

" '... attend at least to the sacred claims of misfortune; and observe, that the slightest hint of such a jest reaching Miss Bertram's ears, would at once induce her to renounce her present asylum, and go forth, without a protector, into a world she has already felt so unfriendly.'

"What could I say to this, Matilda? -- I only cried heartily, begged pardon, and promised to be a good girl in the future. And so here am I neutralized again . . . So I burn little rolls of paper, and sketch Turks' heads upon visiting cards with the blackened end . . . and I jingle on my unfortunate harpsichord, and begin at the end of a grave book and read it backward. -- " (II.viii.133-4)

Julia's scope for the feminine creativity implicit in her whole correspondence up to this point and explicit in this episode is drastically reduced to the listless exercise of conventional feminine "accomplishments": drawing, music, reading. With father and daughter stuck in an isolated country house, the stage is set for their eventual reconciliation, for Julia's confession to Mannering of her relationship with Brown, similar to the confession and reconciliation between Evelina and Villars.⁷⁴ This

⁷³ Note how Mannering's enlightenment curiosity is the basis of his engagement with Indian culture as with Scottish: he describes Indian "manners" here as his younger self investigated Scottish "manners" at I.v.81. Is his very name a reflection of this anthropological bent?

⁷⁴ Burney, *Evelina* II.xxix.

resumption of confidence between them has already been resolved upon by Julia, and set up as a means of closure by the narrative:

"My father . . . I saw but at rare intervals, and was taught to look up to him with more awe than confidence. Would to heaven it had been otherwise! It might have been better for us all at this day!" (I.xvii.268-9)

"I have thought upon it, Matilda, till my head is almost giddy -- nor can I conceive a better plan than to make a full confession to my father." (I.xviii.283)

However, the stage is also set for the interruption to this process that will occupy the second half of the novel. The cruel world outside this domestic scene, from which, as Mannering reminds Julia, it is Lucy's refuge, is about to lay seige to the house, in the form of the smugglers' raiding party. This will reshape Julia's correspondence just as Mannering's reminder puts a stop to her intrigue: an action in the story, it will alter Julia's part in the novel's narrative discourse, just as Mannering's verbal warning circumscribes her actions. Indeed, since, as I have been arguing, Julia's discourse *is* her mode of action, the smugglers' attack forces the two apart in her letters: for she can do no more than observe and report the events that she now witnesses. "I feel the terrors of a child, who has, in heedless sport, put in motion some powerful piece of machinery . . ." (II.x.162-3). Violence, in the seige and in the shooting of Hazlewood by Brown, takes over her letters, rather as Mannering's drawings of native costume take over Lucy's patterns, giving them a new function beyond their original feminine, domestic one. From performative utterance, from pattern on which Matilda can work her reply,

they are transformed to purely descriptive utterance. II.viii is the last properly domestic letter that we get from Julia.

In its last paragraph she returns to the difference between her own reading habits and her addressee's, but this has changed since I.xvii:

"I write all these trifles, because you say that they amuse you, and yet I wonder how they should. I remember in our stolen voyages to the world of fiction, you always admired the grand and the romantic--tales of knights, dwarfs, giants, and distressed damsels, soothsayers, visions, beckoning ghosts, and bloody hands,--whereas I was partial to the involved intrigues of private life, or at farthest, to so much only of the supernatural as is conferred by the agency of an Eastern genie or a beneficent fairy . . . So that, upon the whole, Matilda, I think you should have had my father, with his pride of arms and of ancestry, his chivalrous point of honour, his high talents, and his abstruse and mystic studies . . . (II.viii.135-6)

The contrast between genres has direct relevance to Scott's own text at this point. Immediately before, in II.vii, we have had Brown's traumatic fall into the hands of Meg Merrilies, with her soothsaying and her spells, the sort of tale that Matilda might enjoy; and immediately after, Julia must report that this world of romantic violence has invaded their life at Woodbourne, in the shape of the attack by the smugglers. The connection between the two is made clear in echoing images:

. . . to witness scenes of terror, or to contemplate them in description, is as different, my dearest Matilda, as to bend over the brink of a precipice holding by the frail tenure of a half-rooted shrub, or to admire the same precipice in the landscape of Salvator. (II.ix.138-9)

The spot which he attained for this purpose was the point of a projecting rock, which rose precipitously from among the trees. By kneeling down among the snow, and stretching his head cautiously forward, he could observe what was going on in the bottom of the dell. (II.vii.112)

"What was going on" is the burial of the man shot in the attack on Woodbourne that Julia will describe; a man with Brown's name, from whom Brown got his name, and whom Brown has watched die from the bullet fired by Julia's father.⁷⁵ Julia has been forced from the world of fiction and the precipices of romantic painting, and into the world of real precipices, the ones with dead bodies at the bottom. It is however Brown that will eventually descend.

In I.xvii, Julia had distinguished between herself and Matilda in terms of their different modes of access to the same gothic or oriental stories, and reinvented her father as a gothic or oriental hero. In II.viii, she redescribes her difference with her correspondent in terms of their pleasure in two different types of story, and withdraws her patronage from the gothic novel to the domestic novel. But her father she leaves in the realm of the gothic, an appropriate hero for her reader but not (given her failure to involve him in the "intrigues of private life") for herself as a novelist. And at the same time, this newly-perceived difference between the correspondents undermines the presupposition of common interests on which their correspondence was based: "I write all these trifles, because you say that they amuse you, and yet I wonder how they should" (II.viii.135). Matilda will get her sort of story in the next two letters, of course, but as I have already said, that is because the power to invent material for the sake of her writing is wrested from Julia by external events.

⁷⁵ I shall return to II.vii in the next section.

"Alas! how little we ought to jest with futurity! I closed my letter to you in high spirits, with some flippant remarks on your taste for the romantic and the extraordinary in fictitious narrative. How little I expected to have had such events to record in the course of a few days!" (II.ix.138)

In other words, *Guy Mannering* as a whole tells the sort of story that Matilda likes reading, and not the domestic tale that Julia enjoys. However, the domestic *content* of Julia's discourse is not the only thing that is lost. For after these two chapters of violent goings-on, Julia's epistolary narrative disappears from the text as well. In these letters she has become just another point of view, an eye on a reality beyond her management, like the eye that she puts to a gap between the books barricading the windows at Woodbourne.⁷⁶ Her discourse loses that creativity which had been her distinctive feature. But from II.xi, her discourse disappears from the text altogether, and the text reverts to omniscient third-person narration. From this point, roughly half-way through the novel, "about the middle of the second volume," the enlightenment discourse of the narrator, one he shares with Julia's father, takes over. Julia's voice first adopts the descriptive priorities of the father's discourse, then is replaced by it.

⁷⁶ Julia only says that she "arranged a loop-hole for myself, from which I could see the approach of the enemy" (II.x.145) and not what it was a loophole in; but she has already told us about "the windows were almost blocked up with cushions and pillows, and, what the Dominie most lamented, with folio volumes, brought hastily from the library, leaving only spaces through which the defenders might fire upon the assailants" (II.x.143-4). If one imagines her peering at the assault through piles of old books, however, one has a perfect image of what is happening to her as a narrator: she is no longer a writer of fiction, looking within the house, but an endangered observer of the world beyond both.

Something more complicated is happening here than in the reversion of *Evelina*, for example, from correspondence between heroine and female friend to one between heroine and male mentor. Julia and her father are indeed eventually reconciled: after the man who shot Hazlewood has been revealed as "Brown", and "Brown" has been revealed as Henry Bertram, Mannering asks Julia if this same young man was the one who serenaded her at Mervyn Hall, and thus, indirectly, if it was she who was the object of his attentions in India and not Mrs. Mannering all along. Julia confesses: and their reconciliation is complete when she gives him the letters which reveal her mother's part in establishing this liaison (III.xii.240-1) as she had previously refused to do: "shall her daughter, who inherits all her weakness, be the first to withdraw the veil from her defects?" (I.xvii.270). The apology is accepted: "You have obeyed at least one parent" says Mannering, as he hands the letters back:

"I will never upbraid you with want of confidence . . . he that is too proud to vindicate the affection and confidence which he conceives should be given without solicitation, must meet much and perhaps deserved disappointment." (III.xii.241-2)

In return, Julia's submission is total: "let me but have your approbation and my own, and there is no rule you can prescribe so severe that I will not follow" (III.xii.242).⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Note how the first rule prescribed by Mannering is justified in exactly the terms that caused *Evelina* so much anxiety about the letters exchanged, as she thought, with Lord Orville: ". . . I expect in the first place that all clandestine correspondence -- which no young woman can entertain for a moment without lessening herself in her own eyes, and in those of her lover . . . may be given up" (III.xii.242).

This reconciliation is remarkable for the fact that although the mother must carry all the blame for it to be possible, she is nowhere mentioned by name. The mother's exclusion from the discourse of the general narrator, and from the speech of the characters, is total. To begin to understand why this should be so, we must remember that the autonomy from her father that Julia gives up here is one she shared with her mother. Just as Julia's autonomous narrative voice was omitted by the novel's discourse after II.x, so here the name of the mother is similarly omitted. Its omission is a synecdoche for the omission of feminine discourse from the text.

For, as must be obvious by now, Julia's narrative voice represents more than her individual narrative autonomy as a character within this novel. Like the enlightenment concerns and vocabulary of the male characters and the omniscient narrator, it is identifiable as a type of language used elsewhere, a form of speech appropriated by Scott from its social use outside his text and redeployed within it. Lydia Melford in *Humphry Clinker* speaks with the voice of a sentimental heroine. In *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, examples of the domestic fiction that evolved after the publication of Smollett's novel, the autonomy of the feminine voice is problematized, as a result (I have argued) of their writer's anxiety about her own autonomy as a woman writing for women. By the time Scott came to write *Waverley* and *Guy Mannering*, the feminine domestic novel dominated prose fiction, and Julia's discourse is the discourse of an entire genre. Mrs. Mannering might be taken as a representative of all the women

authors of the "family novel" in whose steps Julia walks when she in turn tries to write "the involved intrigues of private life."⁷⁸

We can go further. Julia's correspondence with Matilda is itself generically marked as the sort of correspondence that occurs in domestic fiction. More than that, it repeats within the text the intersubjective position of the writers and readers of domestic fiction, in the way that Burney was afraid Evelina and Maria's would: the autonomy from men that Julia has as a result of addressing another woman is the same problematic autonomy enjoyed by the woman writer. Evelina's abandonment of this autonomy and resumption of her paternal guardian's confidence is Burney's attempt to allay her anxiety about the feminine autonomy of her fiction. Evelina continues to narrate, but with the moral guarantor of a male addressee. But Julia's subordination to paternal authority is also the subordination of her narrative voice to an omniscient, male, narrator. The suppression of Julia's narrative autonomy in her address to Matilda is the suppression of the feminine autonomy of the

⁷⁸ In taking Julia's mother as a figure for the author of the domestic novel I am parting company with Ian Duncan, whose fascinating reading of *Guy Mannering* in *Modern Romance* has many similarities with my own. As I noted in the Introduction (pp.11-12 above), Duncan assimilates domestic discourse to romance simply by virtue of its femininity, and the effect is that the gender issues raised by Scott's engagement with the domestic novel get lost in the consideration of his relation to a romance tradition absorbed without inflection by its female critics. Duncan's treatment of Julia's mother is a case in point: he comments that "the dominance of her mother over Julia" is "a variant of the female-quixote motif" (121), but then goes on to identify her as a Prospero figure, a romance type of the author divorced from any more specific context of gender or genre (124). Similarly, Duncan abolishes the distinction between the romance that is so often discussed in Julia's letters and the domestic discourse of the letters themselves: "The 'family novel' imagined by her mother, her father's jealousy and the clash with Brown constitute a European fiction charged with the black-magical power of a romance of the East" (122).

domestic novel. What domestic fiction routinely does to its heroines, *Guy Mannering* does to domestic fiction.

(iv) Meg Merrilies: re(e)voking feminine fictionality

However, at just the point where the plot, this "powerful piece of machinery" that Julia (as, before her, her mother) has "put in motion" (II.x.162-3) spins out of the control of its female author, another woman steps in to take control and steer it to its proper end. Meg Merrilies recognizes "Brown" as Bertram of Ellangowan when he stumbles upon her and his dying pirate foster-father in II.vii, immediately before the epistolary chapters II.viii-x in which events overtake Julia's usual capacity to write them. Meg thenceforth takes Bertram under her wing, and makes two decisive interventions in the second half of the novel: the first time when she alerts the residents at Woodbourne by letter of the smuggler's planned attack on the jail where Bertram is a prisoner (III.vii-x); the second when she leads him back to the scene of his kidnapping (III.xiii-xvi).

Meg's authority over events not only replaces Julia's, but is ultimately the same in kind. As Meg takes Brown away in III.xiv, Julia herself makes the connection between Meg's action and the affective nature of the stories she described in I.xvii (see pp. 125-6 above).

"It . . . almost reminds me of the tales of sorceresses, witches, and evil genii, which I heard in India. They believe there in a fascination of

the eye, by which those who possess it controul the will and dictate the motions of their victims." (III.xiv.269)

This also reminds us of Julia's distinction between her reading and Matilda's in II.viii: if *Guy Mannering* has changed from a domestic novel to a gothic or oriental novel in the intervening chapters, the role of author has similarly moved from Julia to Meg. Just as Julia's fictive autonomy from their cognitive, enlightenment discourse was recognized by her mentors, so they recognize Meg's. When he receives her warning of the raid on the prison, Mannering says of her,

"Many of her class set out by being imposters, and end by being enthusiasts, or hold a kind of darkling conduct between both lines, unconscious almost when they are cheating themselves or when imposing on others." (III.viii.141)

Despite these misgivings, he follows her advice and sends the carriage that will rescue Brown and bring him to Woodbourne. Mannering's judgement of Meg is echoed by Pleydell when he reads the same letter:

"This woman has played a part till she believes it; or, if she be a thorough-paced impostor, without a single grain of self delusion to qualify her knavery, still she may think herself bound to act in character." (III.x.189-90)

Within the cognitive discourse of these men, Meg can only be either an imposter or a fool: either she knows that her prophetic role is a put-on, but maintains it for her own ends, or she really believes that she has supernatural powers, but in either case it is inconceivable that she might really have those powers. What the

enlightened gentlemen cannot admit is that Meg's self-perception might be sufficient to *constitute* her powers, that her self-allotted role might allow her to do things others are incapable of. They cannot admit this possibility, for it is incompatible with their model of the subject as cognitive: as the knower of the world, not its creator. Meg's discourse lies outwith theirs for exactly the same reasons that Julia's did. But where the external world, the known world, the world of economics and politics, of social conflict and violence, lays seige to Julia's discourse at Woodbourne and overcomes it, Meg's in turn achieves what a purely cognitive discourse cannot: that is, give the story its ending.⁷⁹

Guy Mannering is unusual among Scott's novels, being structured by the problem of recovering, not a *historical* past, but a *personal* one. As I have already noted, its historical and sociological content recreates the social structures and tensions as they existed in a particular era, rather than analysing change from one social structure to another. There is no sense of great social transformation having occurred between the time of Harry Bertram's birth and kidnapping and the time of his return. Just

⁷⁹ The narrative logic that I am suggesting is at work in this novel, and in *The Black Dwarf*, is thus exactly the opposite of that posited by Duncan when he writes, "The so-called 'dark' heroine, in Scott a figure not of dalliance but of passionate moral rectitude [but still a figure of romance], submits to the historical type (fair, mild) of domestic submission: in effect, donates her magic to the domicile" (*Modern Romance* 71). I am suggesting that the source of energy in these novels is in the domestic to begin with, that is, in the domestic understood as the fictionalizing power of the female author; that the domestic is not just the destination of Scott's plot but also, in its conflict of authority with the narrator, its origin. A domestic power of fictionalizing must be taken over by a romance figure like Meg or Elshie the Dwarf in order to integrate that power within the social-realist discourse of the text.

as his father could only understand political developments in personal terms, just so there is no suggestion in the novel as a whole that the eviction of the gypsies, for example, or the passage of Ellangowan into upstart hands, should be understood as the result of anything other than local and individual interests and personalities. Hence, the particular circumstances of this particular incident, the kidnapping, constitute that past which the text promises to recover: the hermeneutic structure incidental to the story of *Waverley* here structures the text as a whole.

The text describes two attempts to explain what happened on the day that Frank Kennedy died and the five year old Harry Bertram disappeared. Pleydell's investigation in I.x (he is not identified by name as being the investigating Sheriff here until II.xvi) is positivistic, trying to interpret the signs of the struggle on the ground to build a picture of what had happened there. The narration follows the investigation's point of view:

... a deep cut in the head, which, in the opinion of a skilful surgeon, *must have been* inflicted by a broad-sword ... the folds were also compressed, *as if* it had been used as a means of grappling the deceased ... It *seemed* plain, from the appearance of the bed, that the mere weight of one man ... *could not have* destroyed its bias ... (I.x.153-5: my italics)

and so on. The investigation as a whole proceeds back in the same way from Kennedy's corpse to the place where he was thrown from the cliff to the place where he was ambushed. But little in the way of conclusions can be drawn: no-one is convicted of Kennedy's murder, and the boy is not found. The reader, too, is left none the wiser, for the narrator gives us no privileged information about the events of that day.

And indeed never does. To be told what happened, the reader has to wait until III.xiv, when Meg takes Bertram back to the wood at Warroch Point. This journey takes the opposite geographical course to Pleydell's: it retraces the route of the boy's abduction, moving through the wood to the cliff, and ends when Bertram descends to confront his kidnapper, Hatteraick, in the cave at the bottom. But Meg insists that "We maun go the precise track" (III.xiv.279) because she is taking the opposite route to Pleydell in another sense as well. This is not a drawing of deductions from a collection of facts, but a concrete act of remembering, of reliving a traumatic event from the past, both on the part of Meg, and of the young man that she guides, Henry Bertram, the heir of Ellangowan.

Bertram's brow, when he had looked round the spot, became gloomy and embarrassed. Meg, after uttering to herself, "This is the very spot," looked at him with a ghastly side-glance, -- "D'ye mind it?"

"Yes!" answered Bertram, "imperfectly I do." (III.xiv.280)

Meg's autonomous creativity, dismissed by Mannering and Pleydell as self-delusion or imposture, succeeds where their cognitive discourse fails. It is her ability to create, or recreate, in speech and action, a reality that the gentlemen can only try to report, that recovers Bertram as heir to the estate and enables the story to be brought to closure.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Pleydell explicitly opposes Meg's mode of action to that of the law: "The devil take the bedlamite old woman . . . will she not let things take their course, *prout de lege*, but must always be putting in her oar in her own way?" (III.xiv.271). This success of an old, poor woman's memory in recovering the past where the rationality of an educated man has failed is repeated in *The Antiquary*, as Gordon notes: "The distance between the antiquarian and the objects of his investigation is re-emphasized in the scene in which Elspeth sings the ballad of "Red Harlaw." Oldbuck's

Until Bertram comes under Meg's control, he has functioned as Waverley functions, as a wandering viewpoint allowing the reader an objective-seeming portrait of an alien culture, namely the society of Dandie Dinmont's Liddesdale (in II.ii-v). In other words, he is a function of the novel's cognitive discourse. After his encounter with Meg, his function is very different: it is his own identity that is in question, an identity which, when discovered, will make him a part of society rather than its external observer. Hence Meg's assumption of control represents the reverse of the process that strips Julia of her narrative autonomy: where Julia is taken in hand by her father, thus subsuming her performative discourse in the narrator's cognitive one, Brown is taken in hand by Meg, and the cognitive discourse of which he is a function becomes subordinate (as far as the narrative is concerned) to her performative one. His first encounter with her after he leaves Liddesdale symbolizes his loss of the function he had there. He finds her in a ruined tower, at night, when he is lost, by following the light from

a long narrow slit or loop-hole, such as are usually to be found in old castles. Impelled by curiosity to reconnoitre the interior of this strange place before he entered, Brown gazed in at this aperture . . . (II.vi.85)

learning is rich and extensive; Elspeth's mind, in her grief and senility, is as narrowly focused as a mind can be. But she knows antiquity in a way that Oldbuck, scribbling his notes, will never master" (Gordon 40). However, as I suggested in the Introduction, Scott's concern in *The Antiquary* is less with the fictionality of his texts as with their claim to recover the past. Hence the absence of feminine discourse in the third novel, and hence the absence of the supernatural to take its place: Brown notes the avoidance (despite all the included dreams and tales) of unexplained supernatural events in *The Antiquary*, in stark contrast to *Guy Mannering* (Brown 48).

The image of the hero or heroine reduced to observing events through a small opening in a wall or partition often recurs in Scott by way of synecdoche for their detached cognition of events: for example at II.xiv.216 (xxxvii.180) of *Waverley*, where Edward peers through a hole in his sick-bed partition at old Janet, and with her Rose, looking after him; we have already seen how Julia's viewpoint on the attack on Woodbourne in II.ix in this novel figures her reduction to passive observer within its story. But this motif is here reversed: "Brown" is on the outside looking in, at just the point where he is about to abandon his cognitive role.

Further, at just the point where Julia becomes subject to the law of the father, Bertram becomes an outlaw. He goes inside the tower to Meg, who begins to strip him of his old identity. He must give up the portmanteau with all his identifying documents, leaving him "unprovided with means of establishing his own character and credit" (II.vii.115). In return, he is given a purse full of stolen gold; this exchange placing him outside the law, as soon his shooting of Hazlewood will do even more dramatically. And in the course of the night, he watches his adoptive father, the pirate Brown that Mannering shot at Woodbourne, die of his wound. He is without a father and outside the law: a trauma which will only end when he is rescued from prison, at Meg's instigation, and brought to his proper father-figure, Mannering, at Woodbourne.⁸¹

⁸¹ II.vii ends with Bertram setting off on this new part of his story, the narrator following faithfully behind. "Retaining, therefore, his weapon of defence, and placing the purse of the gypsy in a private pocket, our traveller strode gallantly on through the wood in search of the promised

In the meantime, Meg demands three things of Bertram: that he remain silent about her, that he does not follow her, but that he should come as soon as she calls him. The third makes explicit her control over the story: she calls him, and he follows, on the occasion that prompts Julia's connection of her with Eastern magic; the occasion on which she brings the abduction of the child to discourse, the child to confront his abductor, and the story to closure, in chapter III.xiv. The second half of the novel is structured by the delay in Meg's return for "Brown" as well as by the delay in Julia's reconciliation to her father.

The first two of Meg's demands however amount to her temporary exclusion from the discourse of the novel, given that the narrative point of view follows the gentlemen characters' and never follows Meg's unless it coincides with theirs. Among these gentlemen we can include the general narrator. In fact, the kidnapping is not the only crucial event of the story that we are not given in the general narration, nor indeed in Julia's discourse.

high road" (II.vii.118). Note that "our": I agree with Jane Millgate that the general narrator invites "a new relationship between the reader and the action" when the narrative point of view begins to follow Bertram, a closer engagement with the younger hero and greater sympathy for him than was possible with *Mannering* (Millgate 71). But I believe that the meaning of this invitation for the text is more than that, for example, "the text demands that the reader bring to the interpretation of the [Charlieshope] episode [in II.ii-II.v] a keen awareness of literary convention" (Millgate 72). It is surely no coincidence that immediately after this gesture of inclusion on the part of the narrator, not only that this general narrative is abandoned for a series of Julia's letters, but also that the first of these letters opens with a proclamation of loyalty from Julia *to her reader*. As we have seen, this letter ends with Julia uncertain of Matilda's expectations of this correspondence, and in the letters which follow the creative fictionality that has characterized them, and has been governed by their shared novelistic expectations (or literary conventions?), disappears as she comes under the law of the father and its cognitive discourse. Bertram ceases to be a point of view on someone else's actions at just the point where Julia becomes this and nothing else.

The duel between Mannering and Brown in India, the subsequent capture of Brown and the death of Mannering's wife are all given us only in Mannering's confession to Mervyn in I.xii, without comment from the narrator, and in occasional references in the speech of the other characters. Having described the background to these events, namely Sophia Mannering's encouragement of the romance between Julia and Brown, the narrator concludes, "The scenes which followed have been partly detailed in Mannering's letter to Mr. Mervyn; and to expand what is there stated into further explanations would be to abuse the patience of our readers" (I.xviii.281). As is often the case in Scott, the chronic impatience of the reader is used as an excuse for an exclusion made on entirely other grounds. Both kidnapping and the Indian trauma are of course the first and the third of the crises that Guy Mannering predicted for Harry Bertram at his birth in I.iv; the second, an attempt at ten years old to escape his Dutch foster-home by crossing the North Sea in a skiff, is also avoided by the general narrator, being explained first in the speech of the pirate Hatteraick to the villain Glossin (II.xiii.219-20).

This omission by the narrator of all the events correctly predicted by Mannering's astrology at the beginning of the novel is surely not accidental. Scott tells us in his 1829 Introduction that he changed his plan for *Guy Mannering* shortly after beginning it, and decided to down-play the astrological element that is central to the oral narrative on which it was based.

It appeared, on mature consideration, that Astrology, though its influence was once received and admitted by Bacon himself, does not now retain influence over the general mind sufficient even to constitute the mainspring of a romance . . . In changing his plan, however, which was done in the course of printing, the early sheets retained the vestiges of the original tenor of the story, although they now hang upon it as an unnecessary and unnatural incumbrance. The cause of such vestiges occurring is now explained, and apologised for.⁸²

His embarrassment at the astrological motif was evidently not enough to make him abandon the coincidence of Bertram's three crises with Mannering's predictions in I.iv, but it may explain the fact that all of them are narrated by characters within the story, and none by the general narrator himself. If the omniscient narrator described these accidents, it would be difficult for him to avoid admitting outright that astrology, in this case, had actually and remarkably succeeded in predicting the future. This is something that the narrator cannot do within his cognitive, enlightenment discourse. Pleydell and the elder Mannering's inability to comprehend Meg's performative speech is of a piece with the narrator's inability to comprehend the success of the younger Mannering's predictions.

For Meg too predicts Bertram's crises. In the early chapters she is subtly set up as the folk-culture carrier of an art Mannering learnt from the last of its high-culture practitioners. They first meet in the parlour at Ellangowan on the night of Bertram's birth, and it is the only occasion on which Meg is silenced by another, when she hears Mannering half-seriously defending astrology to Sampson, and is "overpowered by a jargon more mysterious than her own" (I.iii.44). I say half-seriously:

⁸² Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang (1892) III."Introduction".xxxvi.

shortly after, going outside to see the stars for the purposes of his horoscope,

. . . Mannering, while gazing upon these brilliant bodies, was half inclined to believe in the influence ascribed to them by superstition over human events. But Mannering was a youthful lover, and might perhaps be influenced by the feelings so exquisitely expressed by a modern poet:

"For fable is Love's world, his home, his birth-place:
Delightedly dwells he 'mong fays and talismans,
And spirits, and delightedly believes
Divinities, being himself divine. . . .
. . . all these have vanish'd;
They live no longer in the faith of reason!
But still the heart doth need a language, still
Doth the old instinct bring back the old names.

(I.iii.48-9: my ellipsis)⁸³

This quotation from Coleridge in this context makes connections crucial to our understanding of *Guy Mannering*. It suggests a general opposition of astrology, superstition, folk-culture and romantic love (Mannering's for his wife-to-be Sophia, in this case) on the one hand, and the "faith of reason," the Enlightenment, on the other. So while the latin astrological terminology with which Mannering beats Sampson into submission a few pages earlier seems alien to Meg, the very fact that she is impressed by it suggests that it has something in common with her own practises. Both, in fact, are discourses placed beyond the bounds of enlightenment rationality.

The contrast between Mannering and Meg is rather that the latter remains true to her beliefs, where Mannering abandons his for the "faith of reason." He is in fact scared off astrology by the

⁸³ The quotation is from Coleridge's translation from Schiller, *The Piccolomini, or, The First Part of Wallenstein*, Act II, scene iv.

unnerving correspondence he finds between young Bertram's horoscope and one he has previously cast for Sophia (I.iv.54-5). While his astrology is merely an intriguing party-piece he is happy to suspend disbelief and take it half-seriously. Once it hints at his *personal* entanglement in the predicted future, he is forced to adopt another attitude: either accepting its truth, committing himself to somehow acting upon the foreknowledge that he has; or rejecting it outright.

In the event, he hedges. He indeed gives the horoscope to Bertram's father, with the proviso that it should not be opened until the first predicted crisis was past and its general content already proved untrue (with the unstated implication that if it did prove true, it would already be impossible to act on, as is the case in the event). But he also "mentally relinquished his art, and resolved, neither in jest nor earnest, ever again to practise judicial astrology" and resolves to tell Bertram, in another judgement at once Mannering's and the narrator's, of "the futility of the rules of art on which he had proceeded" (I.iv.58). It is just after this abjuration that Mannering comes across Meg, telling the child's fortune in her own way. He has been enjoying the picturesque situation of Old Ellangowan, and indulging in sentimental daydreams of a future life in such a place with Sophia.

While Mannering was gazing round the ruins, he heard from the interior of an apartment on the left hand the voice of the gypsy he had seen on the preceding evening. He soon found an aperture, through which he could observe her without being himself visible; and could not help feeling, that her figure, her employment, and her situation, conveyed the exact impression of an ancient sibyl. (I.iv.63)

Note how Mannering's position here replicates Edward's in II.xiv of *Waverley*: this, as we noted above, is Scott's shorthand for the purely cognitive registering of events over which one has no power and no part. Mannering abandons his own performative practice to become the knower, the interested but uninvolved collector, of other people's performances. Here, Mannering's reaction is not to approach Meg to find out if her predictions tally with his. Instead, he only watches and listens to her song, and "afterwards attempted the following paraphrase of what, from a few intelligible phrases, he concluded was its purport:" (I.iv.64).⁸⁴

The congruence of Mannering's and the narrator's point of view implicit in the latter's producing this paraphrase rather than the original has already been noted.⁸⁵ The narrator in fact disowns Mannering's prediction outright: "It will be readily believed, that, in mentioning this circumstance, we lay no weight whatever upon the pretended information thus conveyed" (I.iv.55). He continues with a paragraph of psychological

⁸⁴ Not only does the attack on Woodbourne force Julia to become a mere observer of events, as her father is here, but it prompts her to question the ethics of her performative discourse up to this point, saying of her last letter to Matilda, as her father might have said of his last horoscopes, "Alas! How little we ought to jest with futurity!" (II.ix.138, quoted at p. 134 above).

⁸⁵ The position of Mannering as reporter of Meg's song is replicated in that of the author of the *Magnum Opus* footnotes as reporter of folk-custom. In a note to the previous chapter, the latter adds a description of the "ken-no," the cheese eaten in celebration of the mother's safe delivery by her elderly female attendants. It was so called, he tells us, "because its existence was secret (that is, presumed to be so) from all the males of the family, but especially from the husband and master": a folk-culture example of a female autonomy maintained through a (precarious) fiction perfectly chosen to underline the anti-patriarchal, and anti-cognitive, function of that folk culture in this novel (Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang [1892] III.iii.25).

explanations for the apparent coincidence between the two horoscopes before turning to Mannering's own hedging reaction. It is *Scott*, as implied author, rather than the narrator, who hedges as Mannering does, by at once omitting the enlightenment discourse of his general narrator, while still building the success of that prediction into the plot of his novel.

The role of the folklore of an oral culture in Scott's fiction is emerging from the example of *Guy Mannering* as very different from that posited by Marilyn Orr and Ina Ferris (as outlined in chapter 1 above, pp. 37-41). It is not a way of distributing authority away from the author in an attempt to place the novel in the line of oral tradition: rather it is a way of including within the text capacities which are not those of an extra-novelistic culture at all, but rather those of another sort of novel. The appeal to oral culture is indeed an attempt to displace authority, but an authority understood not as innovation, as novelty, but as plotting, as fictionality.

To understand why, we must go back to my comments on the way that Meg's performative voice replaces that of Julia's letters. It would be obviously wrong to suggest that *Guy Mannering* examines the validity of fortune-telling in the way that it examines Lowland Scottish society, say, or the culture of the gypsies. These are available to the narrative discourse as objects of enlightened curiosity, whereas the terms of that curiosity already preclude the possibility of genuine fortune-telling. The success of Meg's performative discourse, which includes her fortune-telling, in bringing the story to closure,

suggests rather that Scott is using such superstition as a way of getting round an anxiety about his own function as author of that story. For as author, *he* not only *knows* in advance the crises of Harry Bertram's life and how the story is going to end, *he is responsible for those crises and for that end*. As author, he fills the general narrator's voice (and Mannering's, and Mervyn's) with information, with knowledge, about the world around them and its past. As author of a text that claims to describe pre-existing social and cultural realities, Scott shares their cognitive stance. But knowledge is not enough to make a novel. Scott's role as novelist is to make a plot: not to lay out information in a rationally ordered way, but to first hide, then reveal aspects of his story as a way of structuring his text, and that which is hidden and then revealed in *Guy Mannering* are the three crises of Harry Bertram. As novelist he is called upon to perform, to create, and not simply to report. Revelations, closures, he does not allot to his narrator, for he has given that narrator a purely cognitive discourse. Instead, he dissociates this function from the general narrative and gives it to Meg. Meg, and Julia before her, are practitioners of fiction. They are authors of their realities as all of Scott's male characters in *Guy Mannering*, and Scott as author of a realist text, are not.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Hence the similarity between Mannering and his author, their common embarrassment at their responsibility for the plot, should not obscure the fact that Mannering *does* abandon all such responsibility, while Scott *cannot*. Scott's denial is a rhetorical move and no more. Ian Duncan, committed as he is to a reading of these novels as the combination of romance and realism, seems at times to give Mannering a degree of effective authority over the plot to balance Meg's: "This division of the powers of the patron [between the "rational-modern" Mannering and the "natural-magical" Meg] is crucial: it raises the question of narrative authority, and thus of the status of 'romance', to thematic consciousness"

This leaves us with two immediate questions. The first concerns the nature of Scott's anxiety of authorship, and the answer has already been largely anticipated in my discussion of *Waverley*. Insofar as the writing of fiction is a performance, it needs a sense of a readership, an addressee that has certain expectations of that performance, who knows what it is for, and is therefore in a position to read it correctly. The domestic novel, as we have seen, functioned as didactic fiction because it anticipated a young, female readership of a particular social class. Julia's letters to Matilda, as we have seen, replicate the relationship of the female novelist to this readership. But Scott, in *Guy Mannering* as in *Waverley*, cannot anticipate a particular reader in this way. As author Scott is responsible for giving his story an ending, but, writing a new type of novel as he is, he does not know what type of reader-expectations that ending might be a response to. Instead, therefore, he writes a text in response to the dominant fictional genre of his time, and he does this by including its discourse within that text. He tells the reader -- *any* reader familiar with the domestic novel -- how to read his text as a cognitive instrument by contrasting its cognitive status with the

(118). But at other points he recognises that the "symbolic paternity" of Mannering's prediction "is above all textual, in that it exposes a system already written, of which oneself, and the very act of paternity or authorship by which one enters the system, is an effect, a figure, rather than the cause or origin" (130), in which case it is hard to see Mannering as a figure for the author at all. He evades this contradiction with a pun: "In a striking parental allegory that reaches far across Scott's work and much of nineteenth-century fiction, Mannering conceives the romance plot while Meg Merrilies actually bears and delivers it" (125-6). Mannering certainly conceives of the course of the plot as a series of crises at the start of the novel: but he is far from seminal in bringing those crises and their resolution about (except unintentionally and unknowingly, that is, as a character in the plot rather than its author).

non-cognitive, explicitly *fictional*, status of the domestic novel. It is feminine fiction that his omniscient narrator speaks to, not a type of reader: the loss of an intersubjective context is compensated for with the construction of an interdiscursive context. The didactic text is replaced by the cognitive text, but at the price of including the former's discourse within the latter.

However, as in *Waverley*, the performative business of closing the plot remains associated with an autonomous feminine creativity: Meg's. We have seen how Meg's autonomy takes the place of Julia's, while remaining the same in kind, in order to do this. Novelness remains a feminine practice, and Scott can only overlay this fictionality with masculine, cognitive discourse. But we are left with our second question, namely why this replacement of Julia by Meg as the carrier of feminine fictionality is necessary. The answer is that Meg is available as an object of knowledge, and can thus be comprehended by the novel's narrative discourse, in a way that Julia is not.⁸⁷ Meg's autonomy, her ability to generate her own reality in words and deeds, is possible because of her social class, and this can be described in the narrator's enlightenment terms even when her autonomy itself cannot. Julia's autonomy is possible because she inhabits a

⁸⁷ This is ultimately my objection to Ian Duncan's contention that it is romance, the narrative form of an oral culture, that functions as the defining other to the evolving social-realist novel. Oral culture is already there in the social-realist novel as available sociological subject-matter: if it must be assimilated from outside at the level of form (e.g. the level of Meg's authority over the plot) it is because it is carrying a capacity for fiction taken over from elsewhere, from another sort of novel much more dangerously other than a non-novelistic genre could ever be. Duncan's account of the negotiation between realism and romance in effect repeats Scott's homogenizing move in the second half of *Guy Mannering*, missing the more radical opposition that makes this negotiation necessary.

different genre of fiction altogether. Julia's discourse is included in the text so that its inadequacy can be revealed in comparison to the sweeping social portraiture of Scott's new genre. Its inclusion allows Scott to place his text in relation to domestic fiction; having done so, he suppresses that discourse, as if to establish the adequacy of his own, cognitive discourse as an alternative type of fiction. He does this by having Meg (that is, Meg as comprehensible social phenomenon) provide the text with its novelistic closure. However, that which allows Meg to provide this closure is also just that which is not comprehensible in sociological terms, and other character's reactions to Meg identify this power with Julia's fictionality. Feminine fiction returns to complete the text, even after it has been suppressed as the other of the text.

Chapter 3

The Black Dwarf and feminine discourse

Introduction: the story

The Black Dwarf is a short novel, especially by Scott's standards, and its story is quickly told. It is set in the Western Borders at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Young Patrick Earnscliff is a local laird whose father was killed in a brawl with men under the command of Richard Vere of Ellieslaw, a cause of contention that the former is eager to forget, as he is in love with Ellieslaw's daughter, Isabella. Into the area comes a mysterious and (apparently) misanthropic dwarf, who builds himself a cottage at the foot of an ancient standing stone, and establishes a garden there. At first he is treated by the locals with fear and loathing, but he wins their respect by his skill in medicine: he is known as Elshie. He is visited one day by Isabella Vere, whom he seems to recognize, and is moved by her sympathy for him. He gives her a rose, promising that if ever she should find herself in trouble, she need only return to him with the rose, and he would help her.

She soon finds herself in trouble indeed. Her father is mustering Jacobite barons in the hope of overthrowing the recently-passed Union in the name of James VIII, supposed to be with French ships in the Firth of Forth. But the one crucial ally he

has lured into this scheme, Sir Frederick Langley, will only give his support in exchange for the hand of Isabella in marriage. Ellieslaw arranges for his daughter's kidnapping as a way of frightening her into this arrangement, but she is accidentally rescued from the reiver hired for the job by Earnscliff, who is out searching for the fiancée of Hobbie Eliot, one of his tenants, taken during a cattle raid (Grace is returned safe and well after Elshie's intervention). After her return to Ellieslaw Castle, Isabella is finally pressured into agreeing to the marriage: but Elshie's agent within the castle, Ratcliffe, reminds her of the dwarf's promise of help. She goes to him, and he promises his aid. Just as the ceremony is about to take place, he appears to stop it, and Hobbie appears with the local people to arrest the rebels. Elshie, it emerges, is Sir Edward Mauley, originally a close friend of Vere's, who killed Earnscliff's father for him: but while he was in prison for manslaughter, Vere married the woman to whom Sir Edward had been engaged, since before his birth, by his parents: Isabella's mother. The effects of this shock give Vere an excuse to have Sir Edward locked away in an asylum, so that he could enjoy the management of the dwarf's estates, including those of Mrs. Vere, which reverted to Sir Edward by entail on her death. The loyal Ratcliffe eventually got Sir Edward out of the asylum, although the latter renounced all worldly goods, and Vere continued to live off Sir Edward's wealth, his own estate being perilously mortgaged to him through Ratcliffe. After the failure of the rebellion, and the revelation of his duplicity, Vere goes into exile on the continent, leaving Isabella free to marry Earnscliff.

Sir Edward vanishes to a secret retreat, after granting them a generous marriage-settlement.

(i) Superstition and motivation

Criticism of *The Black Dwarf* uniformly judges it a failure. Its mysterious and misanthropic central character places it for most critics in relation to the Gothic novels of Walpole and Radcliffe, and it is as an attempt at this particular mode of fiction that it fails. Jane Millgate is typical of such critics when she writes:

The book remains part attempted exorcism and part preliminary exercise. The mode of Gothic melodrama, expressive of the subconscious world of nightmare, allows Scott to touch on some of his own deepest concerns -- the potential effect of crippling deformity, the wounds of disappointed love -- but the translation of his personal anxieties into terms so grotesque prevents their really troubling his equanimity and vitiates their effectiveness as expressions of the otherwise inexpressible . . .

The Black Dwarf remains in the end a work composed of separate strands that fail to mesh together: the comic realism of the Hobbie Elliot plot, the melodrama of the dwarf and Isabella, the quieter account of Earnscliff as a man of moderation caught up in violent events.¹

There is certainly something fragmented, uncertain, tentative about this novel which needs to be explained. Millgate does so in terms of an incongruity between the personal anxieties of the author and the genre in which he has chosen to explore them; the result (it is implied) is a distancing of those anxieties from the other, more familiar aspects of Scott's personality (his moderation, his sympathy for and interest in the folk) and from

¹ Millgate 113-14.

their roots in that personality. This, I want to show, is getting the problem the wrong way round. The lack of cohesion in *The Black Dwarf* is the result, not of the failure of the text to adequately express Scott's personal anxieties, but of Scott's anxieties about the nature of the text itself. It is indeed an "exorcism", of ghosts not from Scott's past, but from the past of the novel. It is an attempt, like *Guy Mannering* before it, to place Scott's new genre, historical realism, in relation to the fictional genres that have gone before. As such, it has much to tell us about Scott's project generally, and cannot be written off as a peculiar lapse from the sequence of novels into which it "obtrudes its stunted and obscure presence."²

A good place to begin might be Scott's own criticism of one of those genres, the gothic novel itself, and that precisely in its melodramatic mode, the work of Ann Radcliffe. Distinguishing between narrative which demands that the reader enter into the beliefs of the middle ages and simply accept supernatural agency when it appears, and "that which, being in itself possible, may be a matter of belief at any period," he continues:

Mrs. Radcliffe . . . has endeavoured to effect a compromise between those styles of narrative, by referring her prodigies to an explanation founded on natural causes, in the latter chapters of her romances . . . The reader feels indignant at discovering that he has been cheated into sympathy with terrors, which are finally explained as having proceeded from some very simple cause; and the interest of a second reading is entirely destroyed by his having been admitted behind the scenes at the conclusion of the first.³

² Brown 214.

³ Walter Scott, Introduction to "Horace Walpole", Vol.v, *Ballantyne's Novelists Library*; reprinted Williams 89.

This might be used as an objection to *The Black Dwarf* itself, since here too there is the suggestion of supernatural forces at work when Elshie arrives in the area, and in particular the presence of an unidentified companion who mysteriously vanishes at the approach of a third party.⁴ Every such suggestion is given a perfectly natural explanation by the end of the story: the satanic companion turns out to be Ratcliffe, the dwarf's agent at Ellieslaw Castle, who has access to a secret passage linking the castle with Elshie's hut.⁵

This is an objection which cannot be levelled at *Guy Mannering*. There is an initial similarity between the earlier novel and *The Black Dwarf*, in the way that the text makes the association of Elshie with the supernatural one more aspect of a folk-culture, located in place and time, that is available as an object of the author's and reader's knowledge. We have already seen how Meg Merrilies' supernatural claims were knowable as a sociological fact despite being themselves unbelievable within enlightened terms of reference, and the supernatural status of Elshie in the society of the area works in a similar way within this text. However, *Guy Mannering* simply presents Meg's

⁴ The objections to Radcliffe have indeed been so used. See Mody C. Boatright, "Scott's Theory and Practice Concerning the Use of the Supernatural in Prose Fiction" *PMLA* Vol. L (1935): 235-61. Referring to Hobbie's first sight of Ratcliffe and his supernatural interpretation of it (at 10.71.22 ff), Boatright says, "Whether Scott meant for his reader to share in Hobbie's conjecture is not clear" (245); but of course Scott is only breaking his own rules here if he did. I believe he did not, as will become clear.

⁵ Ratcliffe, or Radcliffe? Although the above quoted essay was written six years after *The Black Dwarf*, it is hard to believe that this coincidence of names is unintentional, with perhaps the *d* made a *t* to reflect Ratcliffe's underground scurrings. If so, it is another signal that we should take Scott's play with Gothic conventions here quite seriously.

predictions (and the young Mannering's, for that matter) without attempting to explain their success in its own terms. *The Black Dwarf* can so explain Elshie's actions.

That said, the reader is never in any real doubt, even on a first reading, that such an explanation will eventually emerge. Elshie's supernatural status is never presented as more than the result of folk belief. Elshie, on his first arrival in the country, is identified as the Brown Man of the Moors, and his appearance understood as presaging specifically *political* disaster. This expectation is justified by appeal to his appearances during the preceding century of civil war:

"... -- what can evil beings be coming for for to distract a poor country, now it's peacefully settled, and living in luv and law? ... My father aften tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bluidy fight at Marston-Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar, and, in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell-Brigg ..." (3.26.21-7)

Of course, civil war *is* in the offing. But there is never any reason to share Grandma Eliot's conviction that it has been brought on by Elshie's appearance: on the contrary, the beginning of chapter 2 has sketched the precise historical circumstances behind the incipient Jacobite revolt. Elshie's supernatural status is subsumed in the historical realism of the text as a whole.

The text indeed plays with this comprehensibility of the irrational in political terms. Earnscliff and Hobbie watch Elshie and his mysterious companion from a distance:

. . . Earnscliff explained this phaenomenon by supposing it to be the Dwarf's shadow.

"De'il a shadow has he," replied Hobbie Elliot, who was a strenuous defender of the general opinion; "he's ower far in wi' the Auld Ane to have a shadow . . ." (4.31.29-33)

Later, as the Jacobites gather at Ellieslaw-Castle, Marischal-Wells explains to Ratcliffe the combination of family tradition and patriotism that demands his adherence to the cause. "And for the sake of these shadows . . . you are going to involve your country in war, and yourself in trouble?" Ratcliffe replies (12.85.4-5). The echo suggests that the ancient loyalties of the landlords are as baseless as the superstitions of their tenants. The appearance of a ghost on the moor is taken to mean the imminence of war, but the war itself has meaning only in terms of other ghosts. This equation is only possible if the reader already disregards the peasantry's superstitious beliefs about Elshie.⁶

Working against this association of Elshie's appearance with the onset of civil war is the symbolism of his size. The border country in which he arrives is markedly less warlike than was traditionally the case, and this is expressed in the popular mind as a physical diminishing of the men who inhabit it. "He'll ne'er fill his father's boots" is the disappointed response when Willie of Westburnflat puts up no resistance to Earnscliff's demand for his prisoner (9.63.29). We are even given the half-humorous assurance that the process has continued after the period in which the story is set: a dent made in Westburnflat's lintel by Hobbie's sword "is still shewn as a memorial of the superior

⁶ There is a further irony in Ratcliffe's words which is only perceived once the full facts about Elshie are known, as he is himself the dwarf's vanishing companion that Earnscliff explains away as his shadow.

strength of those who lived in the days of yore" (9.65.1-3). Into this country comes Elshie, and settles among the standing-stones that legend explains as a petrified witch and her flock of geese, and whose dimensions "were often appealed to, as a proof of the superior stature and size of old women and of geese in the days of other years . . ." (2.17.2-4). These stones, remnants of a past age of supernatural power and heroic violence, Elshie builds into a house. In this context Elshie, far from presaging the recurrence of war, literally embodies the new, more peaceful times come upon the Borders, times for smaller, more domesticated men. Perhaps it would be truer to say that he embodies the juxtaposition of the two, the incongruity of the old ways in the presence of the new: "It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterward capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf" (4.29.23-6).

So where a superstitious folk make Elshie a sign of reversion to war, the narrator makes him a symbol of the transition to civil peace. However, neither of these contrasting meanings that are ascribed to Elshie refer to his own motivations as an individual character: they both make him a sign for plans or processes that lie outwith him. Elshie's own motivation remains elided for much of the text: the story of his life before Earnscliff and Hobbie find him on the moor is only very gradually revealed to us, and is only made quite clear in the last chapter. This gradual revelation of the truth about the dwarf itself

structures the text, and in the meantime we are offered pure misanthropy as an explanation of his actions.

In the meantime also we are given plenty of realistic motivation as an explanation for the other characters' actions. Motives fall into two categories. The first, already mentioned, are the *political* motives of the Jacobite conspirators in the context of the unrest following the Act of Union. The second I am going to call the *romantic* motives of the novel's young lovers, Earnscliffe and Isabella Vere. Because Isabella's father is the leader of the local Jacobites, and Earnscliffe is one of Scott's men of moderation, the two sets of motives clash. Hobbie's introductory conversation with Earnscliff in chapter 2 generates an expectation of a familiar romance plot, where romantic love cuts across the political divide; as an ending, one expects either that the political division will be healed by the marriage of the lovers, or that the lovers will be destroyed by the old rivalries that they have dared to ignore.

We can thus distinguish two types of closure available for this text: one consisting of the working out of its characters' motivations, the triumph of one set of intentions over another; and the revelation of Elshie's actual motivation in settling in this area in the first place. To adopt Roland Barthes' terminology, closure can be produced by the proairetic code (in the first instance) or by the hermeneutic code (in the second):⁷ Elshie's

⁷ In Barthes *x* and *passim*. Those various motivational logics that make the actions of the characters connected and comprehensible constitute the proairetic code of the text. A heightened interest in individual motivation I take to be characteristic of the novel in general but particularly of that mode we call realism.

case constituting the proairetic code put at the service of the hermeneutic, since that which is hidden and then revealed is precisely his individual motivation. In this we find another contrast with *Guy Mannering*. In that novel, the intentions behind the characters' actions (Brown's love for Julia, Mannering's desire to help the surviving Bertrams, Glossin's greed) are usually clear from the start. Its whole hermeneutic structure comes from the hidden fact of Brown's true identity, and the various possible modes of that fact's revelation.⁸ Here, because we are not told why Elshie does what he does, because we must accept his various possible significations in the place of his motivation, the question of his identity arises insofar as it would explain that motivation.

What makes *The Black Dwarf* important for this thesis is the way in which these two types of motivations, and these two types of closure, prove to be interrelated. For as in *Guy Mannering*, this text is structured by its interdiscursive relations as well as by its codes.

⁸ The one character whose motives are not known until the end is Meg herself, but that is not a question raised until she reappears to guide Bertram fairly late in the book. Her ends, indeed, prove as explicable as Elshie's; her means of achieving them remain inexplicable as Elshie's do not.

(ii) Isabella, Lucy and feminine discourse

As Isabella Vere and her friend Lucy Ilderton ride home from their first meeting with Elshie, Lucy conceives of her plan for Isabella's elopement with Earnscliff as a counter-plot to Isabella's father's political manoeuvrings, its equivalent and opposite.

"Now that your father and his guests seem so deeply engaged in some mysterious plot . . . it may not be impossible for us (always in case matters be driven to extremity) to shape out some little supplemental conspiracy of our own. I hope the gentlemen have not kept all the policy to themselves . . ." (5.40.30-8)

Lucy then goes on to suggest that they include Earnscliff in their plans. This does not happen: Isabella is kidnapped on her father's orders before their plot can be organized, and she will be saved from marriage to Sir Frederick Langley not by Earnscliff, her future husband, but by the dwarf, on the basis of the contract struck with him immediately before she has this conversation with Lucy. Their "supplemental conspiracy" thus remains a purely female plan of action, and indeed Isabella's father will, despite his political and familial reasons for speaking otherwise, complain of her conspiracy with Lucy rather than any connection with Earnscliff just before she is kidnapped.

I want to discuss the significance of Isabella's contract with Elshie later on. Here I want to note how at this point the text itself is constituted by a feminine discourse distinct from that which makes up the rest of the narrative. It is not simply that the plot being discussed by the young women runs counter to the

Jacobite plot of the male characters: that is a matter of the contrasting motivational logics that we have been discussing. On another level, and like Julia Mannering's letters in *Guy Mannering*, their conversation itself is an intrusion into the narrative discourse of the conventions of feminine domestic fiction. The very fact of its being a conversation between two upper-class women with no men present marks it, like that between Rose and Flora in *Waverley* III.v (see above p.73), as autonomously feminine, quite apart from the plan of action that they discuss therein. It also includes one of domestic fiction's most characteristic traits, namely a consciousness of the questionable effect on female behaviour of reading romantic literature. Just as Julia Mannering sees the world through her reading in oriental fiction, so Lucy Ilderton seems to see her world through the filter of romance and romantic drama.

"How can you talk so wildly, Lucy? Your plays and romances have positively turned your brain . . .

". . . Not a bit, my dear Isabella," said Lucy. ". . . You laugh at my skill in romance; but, I assure you, should your history be written, like that of many a less distressed and less deserving heroine, the well-judging reader would set you down for the lady and love of Earnscliff, from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable." (5.41.11-2, 28-37)

The pairing of the sensible Isabella with the romantic Lucy replicates that of Elinor and Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility*. This is a type of pairing designed to problematize the female relationship to fiction, and as such owes more to Lady Honoria Pemberton's ambiguous example to Cecilia than to Anna's support for Clarissa. The question raised here about the autonomy from the law of the father afforded young women by fiction is

Burney's and Austen's exactly; but, as in *Guy Mannering*, this question is raised not to be answered so much as to mark the speech of Lucy and Isabella as the discourse of the domestic novel. The independent action that they plan will after all never happen, but the terms in which they discuss it mark their dialogue generically. Hence, even though there are no formal indications that this is so (division of female speech from narrative discourse generally by placing it in letters or journal entries), this conversation between Isabella and Lucy is an appropriation from domestic fiction as much as Julia's letters in *Guy Mannering*.⁹

Given this *discursive* division in the text, one could then offer *fictional* as an alternative label for the romantic motivations within the story, for in *The Black Dwarf* such motives are only understood in terms of the conventions of fictional romance. The possibility of Isabella's elopement with Earnscliff is discussed, by Isabella Vere and Lucy Ilderton at this point, and Isabella's father and Ratcliffe in chapter 11, only as the product of female fictional creativity. Neither Earnscliff nor Isabella alone or together describe their feelings for one another in this way: but neither Earnscliff nor Isabella describe such feelings *at all*, or admit that they might be the motive behind their actions.¹⁰ Scott

⁹ This autonomy of a pair of characters from the discourse of their narrator, despite the enclosure of their speech within that discourse, might once again be described as the impossibility of assimilating their perspective on events to that of a consensual-realistic narrator such as that described by Elizabeth Ermarth: see above p.132 fn.71.

¹⁰ Indeed, the exclusively fictional understanding of love in *The Black Dwarf* depends upon the complete omission of any conversation between Isabella and Earnscliff, or any privileged account of their feelings *until* Isabella is in the grip of the final crisis, when she is almost forced into marrying Sir Frederick Langley, and *then* she has no time to think of

does not just build his story out of a clash between the political and romantic ambitions of his characters: his text consists of a clash of discourses along related (but, as we shall see, not identical) lines.

As in *Guy Mannering*, the heroine's father, suspicious of the female autonomy possible within this discourse, castigates the female-female relationship which it constitutes as superficial. Where Colonel Mannering merely comments to Julia that "You have a genius for friendship, that is, for running up intimacies which you call such,"¹¹ Ellieslaw complains in more violent terms.

"Now, for example, the Friendship to whom a temple should be here dedicated, is not Masculine Friendship, which abhors and despises duplicity, art and disguise; but Female Friendship, which consists in little else than a mutual disposition on the part of the friends, as they call themselves, to abet each other in obscure fraud and petty intrigue." (11.75.18-23)

This as he leads his daughter to the place where he has arranged for her to be kidnapped. Two pages later he is blaming this kidnap on Lucy Ilderton's "schemes" (11.77.8) and after another two he justifies this accusation to Ratcliffe with a letter from Lucy addressed to Earnscliff.

"You see she writes to him as a confidante of a passion which he has the assurance to entertain for my daughter; tells him she serves his cause

Earnscliff. When Hobbie Elliot suggests that Earnscliff is in love with Isabella Vere, he denies it "rather angrily" (2.19.5). Isabella's rescue from her kidnappers by a band led by Earnscliff is accidental, as we shall see, and Earnscliff's increased interest as she appears at the gate of the castle at Westburnflat is the only sign of feeling that we get from him. Isabella's concern throughout is not explicitly to marry Earnscliff, but to avoid marriage to Sir Frederick.

¹¹ *Guy Mannering* I.xviii.294

with her friend very ardently, but that he has a friend in the garrison who serves him yet more effectually. Look particularly at the pencilled passages, Mr Ratcliffe, where this meddling girl recommends bold measures, with an assurance that his suit would be successful anywhere beyond the bounds of the barony of Ellieslaw." (11.79.3-10)

We know very little of any passion which Earnscliff has the assurance to entertain for Isabella. We know there is a connection, but not that they are communicating through Lucy Ilderton. That Earnscliff might rely on Lucy to "serve his cause" with Isabella seems very unlikely. Our suspicions are in any case aroused by those "pencilled passages": Lucy's additions, in pencil so that Earnscliff might erase them after he has read the letter? or so that *she* might erase them before it was even sent? Or are they Ellieslaw's, to move blame for the kidnapping onto Earnscliff? The problem is irresolvable because we know that Lucy is quite capable of writing such a letter as a means of authoring her own real-life romance without the knowledge of either Isabella or Earnscliff; without it having any reference to the actual state of their relationship; without even planning to send it to its addressee. But it has fallen into the hands of the political intriguers just as Isabella has.

We are not given Lucy's actual words in that letter, and indeed after that one conversation we never hear Lucy and Isabella talk together again: feminine discourse is silenced here just as in *Guy Mannering*. What happens to that discourse is in fact just what happens to Elshie's behaviour when he first arrives in the area: the motives behind it are effaced, and it becomes a sign for something else. Just as the folk, ignorant of Elshie's real motives for settling among them, make his arrival a supernatural

sign of impending war, so Ellieslaw projects the origin of his violence against his daughter into the realm of feminine literary creativity.¹² The difference is that when feminine discourse is effaced from the text, so is the possibility of female action. Feminine discourse, here as in *Guy Mannering* (and *Clarissa*), is the young women's mode of action. Its appropriation by the father leaves them dependent on others for the fulfillment of their intentions. Elshie, on the other hand, survives with his motives and mode of action hidden, not destroyed, by his signifying function among the folk.

Millgate complains of Isabella that

She is given only one free scene in which to act at less than full heroic stretch -- the conversation with her cousin Lucy Ilderton -- and this is not only much feebler than similar scenes in the other novels, its invocation of fictional parallels heavy-handed rather than witty, but it blurs the clarity of the melodramatic method employed elsewhere in her portrayal. Scott had created his own problem: he needed one kind of heroine for the black and white of Elshie's story and another for the social-restoration theme he had attempted to articulate through the story of Earnscliff.¹³

There is clearly more to it than this. Lucy Ilderton's invocation of fictional parallels may be heavy-handed, but that does not necessarily extend to the invocation of domestic fiction that Scott achieves thereby. This latter invocation is not there for its own sake, or as an occasion for intertextual wit. The comparison with *Guy Mannering* reveals that Isabella's single appearance in this

¹² Even as he does this, of course, Ellieslaw is resorting to exactly the sort of duplicity that he had alleged was the essence of female friendship, except that his motivation is political rather than fictional or romantic. Just as Ratcliffe's words associate the ends of the rebels with imagined ghosts, so Ellieslaw's behaviour towards Isabella assimilates his means to those ends with the feminine fictionality he ostensibly condemns.

¹³ Millgate 113.

non-melodramatic context is not a problem with her portrayal as a character. It is in part a result of the comparatively small scale of this text: Julia Mannering gets two sets of letters to Matilda. It is also however a result of Scott's deliberate removal of the very possibility of that sort of female-female conversation when Lucy is banished from Ellieslaw Castle at the end of chapter 11. We have seen how the intrusion of that feminine discourse has an effect on the course of the story (in the shape, within the story, of Lucy's letter); here, an event in the story effectively precludes a recurrence of that discourse.¹⁴ Scott acknowledges the possibility of this becoming or at least including one sort of story, with one sort of role for its heroine, then removes that possibility and lets it become another sort of story, in which Isabella can only act at "full heroic stretch."¹⁵ At the level of the story, a piece of feminine (romantic) discourse (Lucy's letter) is seized and, because of its quasi-fictional nature, can be made to serve masculine political ends. At the level of discourse, and in the same move, Scott appropriates a feminine (domestic) fictional voice which then vanishes from the text. We are left with the question of precisely what ends are served thereby.

¹⁴ Lucy's banishment from Ellieslaw Castle is an acting-out of what has already happened at the symbolic level. We only hear the young women talking together as they ride on the moors, because even at this point the house, by definition the natural fictional habitat of domestic discourse, has been occupied by the forces of political history in the shape of Ellieslaw's Jacobite allies. As a synecdoche for the process at work in the novel as a whole, this ranks as symbol with the assault by pirates on Woodbourne in II.ix of *Guy Mannering*, though greatly less foregrounded than the latter.

¹⁵ In general, I suspect, melodrama is not the Scott heroine's natural abode, but it is all that is left her when she is isolated from her female friends in a masculine, political world; all that is left her, when her domestic novel disappears beneath her feet and she finds herself on the cold hillside of Scott's historical realism.

(iii) Elshie and elision

In contrast to the young women, whose behaviour, according to Ellieslaw, is governed by a commitment to one another, Elshender the Recluse at first defines himself as an outcast from all human society. His first words, to Earnscliff and Hobbie on the moor at night, are reminiscent of Meg Merrilies' "Ride your ways" speech in *Guy Mannering*.¹⁶

"Pass on your way, and ask nought at them that ask nought at you . . .

"Pass on your way . . . I want not your guidance -- I want not your lodging -- it is five years since my head was under a human roof, and I trust it was for the last time . . .

"Pass on your way . . . the breath of your human bodies poisons the air around me -- the sound of your human voices goes through my ears like sharp bodkins." (3.21.28-22.2)

Unlike Meg the gypsy, however, Elshie is not just an outcast from settled, "respectable" society, but from humanity itself. "Common humanity!" exclaimed the being, with a scornful laugh that sounded like a shriek, "where got ye that catch-word -- that noose for woodcocks -- that common disguise for man-traps -- . . ." (3.22.8-10). This alienation from humanity takes the form, in his first encounters with others at his new home, of a refusal to speak with them, except to abuse them and the language that links them. Language Elshie conceives as a weapon or a trap, and his only profit in it is to curse. His first words on the second visit of the two young men the following morning are prompted by Hobbie's suggestion, after some time labouring on the walls of the

¹⁶ *Guy Mannering* I.viii.124-5.

house under Elshie's wordless direction, that they might deserve some thanks in return.

"Thanks! . . . There -- take them, and fatten upon them! -- take them, and may they thrive with you as they have done with me -- as they have done with every mortal worm that ever heard the word spoken by his fellow reptile . . ." (4.30.6-10)

Once he has established himself in the area as a herbalist and oracle, this incommunicability begins to diminish. He accepts the "simplest necessities" in return for his advice and his drugs, but his words remain "just sufficient to express his meaning as briefly as possible, and he shunned all communication that went a syllable beyond the matter in hand" (4.32.30-2). A system of exchange is established, but Elshie's self-sufficient agriculture allows him to maintain a sort of autonomy from the others within it, by allowing him to reject "money, or any article which it did not suit him to accept" (4.32.27).

No-one is allowed to have any claims on Elshie, and it seems as if Elshie makes no claims on others. The next two chapters show both of these principles undermined. Of first significance for the story are the offers of mutual assistance that he exchanges with Isabella at the beginning of chapter 5, immediately before the intrusion into the text of a feminine discourse that we have already discussed. Brought to Elshie's house by the curiosity of the Ilderton sisters, the sincerity of her offer of help brings tears to the eyes of the dwarf: he recognizes her as the daughter of his former fiancée. In return he promises to come to her aid, if he can, in her hour of adversity. This

opening in his misanthropic persona remains marked by his suspicion of language, however, and of the relationships that it mediates. He answers "with a broken voice, and almost without addressing himself to the young lady. 'Yes, 'tis thus thou should'st think -- 'tis thus thou should'st speak, if ever human speech and thought kept touch with one another! They do not -- they do not -- Alas! they cannot. And yet -- . . . ' " (5.38.10-14). He gives her, as a token of his promise, not more words, but "a half-blown rose." It is with this and with her physical presence, rather than with his verbal promise, that she must return when she needs his assistance.

"But no message," he exclaimed, rising into his usual mood of misanthropy, -- 'no message -- no go-between! Come thyself; and the heart and the doors that are shut against every other earthly being, shall open to thee and to thy sorrows. And now pass on." (5.38.19-21)

Elshie has reason to be suspicious of verbal promises. He has brought Willie of Westburnflat, the reiver, back to health with his medical attention, and the next chapter opens with Westburnflat visiting Elshie on horseback, on his way to the burning of Hobbie's farm. "All those promises of amendment which you made during your illness forgotten?" notes the dwarf bitterly (6.43.8-9). Now, the fact that Elshie should *try* to extract a promise of good behaviour from a professional thief and murderer, however improbable that it would be kept, contradicts the explanation he has already given Earnscliff of the motives of his medical work. This explanation is the only insight that we are

given into Elshie's underlying motivation until the end of the narrative.

"If I cannot send disease into families, and murrain among the herds, can I attain the same end so well as by prolonging the lives of those who can serve the purpose of destruction as effectually? -- If Alice of Bower had died in winter, would young Ruthwin have been slain for her love this last spring?- . . ." (4.33.33-8)

Elshie goes on to mention his attention to Westburnflat as another instance of his misanthropy disguising itself as its opposite.

Elshie's involvement with Westburnflat draws our attention to his role in manipulating the consequences of the two acts of violence at the centre of the novel: the kidnapping of Isabella Vere, and the abduction of Grace Armstrong. Willie of Westburnflat is involved in both of them, and so one could say that Elshie in his role as Willie's preserver is in part responsible for what happens. However, what I have chiefly in mind is Elshie's hint to Hobbie, and hence to the rescue party led by Earnscliff, that they should look for Grace in the direction of Westburnflat in chapter 8. He does this knowing that Grace was in the care not of Westburnflat but of Charlie Cheat-the-Woodie, one of Westburnflat's fellow thugs from Cumberland, and that she will soon be released, having bribed Westburnflat to that end. Further, Willie has already told him, in relating his plans for Grace, "There's a ladye, that, unless she be a better bairn, is ganging to foreign parts whether she will or no" (7.48.43-49.2). Given Elshie's knowledge of her family circumstances, indeed the presence in Ellieslaw Castle of his agent, Ratcliffe, Elshie must know that this is Isabella. This knowledge of Elshie's is

suppressed from the text at this point, however. Elshie does not tell the rescue party that they are in fact going to rescue Isabella, nor does Scott allow us access to Elshie's thoughts immediately after he receives this information. The narrative point of view has been on Elshie for the previous four chapters, as Hobbie, Earnscliff, the Ildertons and Isabella, and Willie of Westburnflat come to offer help, give him news or ask his advice, but at this point it follows Hobbie away from the dwarf and to the seige at Westburnflat.¹⁷ Scott thus makes Isabella's rescue seem accidental, and her appearance from the castle at Westburnflat a narrative surprise, a jump from the chain of events as they have been described up to this point into a new set of circumstances that will need retrospective explanation. Both Elshie and Scott's narrative structure thus manufacture ignorance: Elshie does not tell Hobbie what he is doing in sending him west, and Scott delays informing the reader of what Elshie knows or suspects until later. Let us examine Elshie's silence and his author's in turn.

By the end of the story, Hobbie Eliot sees Elshie not as one who merely delays but as an active force of complication:

It was Hobbie's opinion, and may be that of most of our readers, that the Recluse of Meikle-stane-Moor had but a kind of a gloaming, or twilight understanding; and that he probably had neither very clear views as to what he himself wanted, nor was apt to pursue his ends by the clearest and most direct means: so that to seek the clew of his conduct, was likened, by Hobbie, to looking for a straight path through a common, in which are a hundred devious tracks, but not one distinct line of road. (18.121.20-8)

¹⁷ It is hard to imagine more different characters than Elshie and Fanny Price, and yet the way in which the narrative focuses in these chapters on the "innocent" figure of the dwarf, unmoved and yet the place to and from which all the active characters come and go, is strongly reminiscent of chapter 10 of *Mansfield Park*. A profound difference, comprising perhaps Elshie's whole meaning in the text, underlies the inverted commas I am obliged to put around "innocent" in the context of *The Black Dwarf*.

This view is given credence by the gratuitous nature of Elshie's secrecy, but Elshie's action over the kidnappings does not in fact provide *The Black Dwarf* with its central complication. Once Grace and Isabella are safely returned no-one bothers with the apparently chance means by which this end was achieved, and Isabella's seemingly accidental return to Ellieslaw Castle moves the plot not to its end, nor even into a more complicated middle, but *right back to its start*. Elshie's action has prevented a premature end, but has not made matters any worse in order to do this. The postponed revelation of what Elshie already knows constitutes delay merely. This function of Elshie's in the narrative resembles that which he assigns himself in chapter 4, that of the delayer of the end, the provider of a central space in a narrative within which more pain and more complication will have time to develop.¹⁸ He does not himself add to the complication of the love-versus-politics plot. In the context of Lucy's earlier observation that Isabella is unmistakably destined for Earnscliff, "from the very obstacle which you suppose so insurmountable" (5.41.36-7), that obstacle, so necessary in literary terms for a successful romance, remains the political commitment of her father, and is not due to any interference on Elshie's part. Elshie's manipulation of the rescue party appears to be motivated purely by his continued desire to hide his benevolence under an enigmatic misanthropy.

¹⁸ This is also the function assigned to Elshie by Westburnflat, and that in more explicitly narrative terms, when he says he will come back from the raid with "a blythe tale in return for your leech-craft" (6.44.12). Elshie's medicine might not be exchangeable for good behaviour, but it can be swapped for a good story.

This desire for disguise might explain Elshie's silence before Hobbie on the identity of the prisoner at Westburnflat, but it leaves the problem of Scott's refusal to let the reader in on the secret at this point. The clew of his conduct in this respect lies in the swing away from Elshie's point-of-view that accompanies and facilitates this silence on Scott's part, and the new focus on events at Ellieslaw Castle that replaces the focus on Elshie. If the reader were told of the information that Elshie has at this point, it might prompt her rather too forcefully to ponder a possible connection with Ellieslaw Castle, and specifically with the under-explained presence of Ratcliffe there. By the time that Ratcliffe reveals this connection, in chapter 15, Elshie's role in the kidnap, and indeed the kidnap itself, are no longer an issue, precisely because the resolution of the kidnap episode seemed to move the plot no further forward.

This answer then raises a further question, namely why Scott should be so concerned to keep the possibility of Elshie's intervention suppressed during the Ellieslaw chapters, and it is at this point that we must return to a consideration of Elshie's relation to the young women of the novel. The shift of focus from the moor to the castle is also a shift back in time to the point of Isabella's original kidnap. This highlights the change in our centre of interest, but it also means that the following chapter describes a crisis whose apparently accidental resolution we have already witnessed. The effect of this is to isolate the meaning of the incident entirely in the way in which, as we have seen, it excludes the possibility of feminine discourse. Lucy's exclusion is

the one real consequence of the kidnap episode within the story, for Isabella finds herself returned to a house in which the one form of resistance previously available to her has been removed. The move which excludes Elshie's point-of-view from the discourse of the novel is also that which removes Lucy Ilderton from the story and with her the potential for a female counter-plot. The exclusion of feminine discourse from the novel from this point on works in tandem with the exclusion of the dwarf to leave Isabella isolated in the face of her father's rule and a historical-realist text: the next four chapters are occupied by the political manoeuvrings of the would-be rebels. However, Elshie will return to the story when Isabella calls him, whereas Lucy is lost forever.¹⁹ The young women, in other words, lose their autonomy when their discourse is appropriated as a sign for the plans of others: but Elshie, having lain low under the signs that others have made of *him*, reappears to exert *his* autonomous power to save Isabella from a forced marriage. *Elshie's secret power over Ellieslaw replaces the female counter-plot as the force capable of providing this novel with its proper ending.* The success of what I have called the romantic or fictional motivation of Lucy and Isabella can only be achieved if they abandon their autonomous discourse as its vehicle and adopt another, in the shape of the Black Dwarf.

¹⁹ Lucy will be mentioned again in the last pages as having married the reformed Jacobite, Marischal-Wells.

(iv) Feminine agency and closure

We are now in a position to survey the various plots and discourses of *The Black Dwarf* in their mutual interrelation. Lucy and Isabella conceive of their female plot as a romantic counter-plot to the politically-motivated schemes of Isabella's father, a way of enfolding those schemes within their own so that the planned rebellion does no more than provide the necessary complication, the narrative middle, to a story of which they are the authors. However, just as their plot works to appropriate the forces of history and make them work to fictional ends, so in this plan of authorship they are frustrated by the appropriation of this plot by Isabella's father, who can make it work to his own, *political* ends. He is able to do this through the agency of a letter, one written with questionable intentions and almost certainly corrupt, but at the same time marked as feminine and available for appropriation. Ellieslaw serves his ends through the appropriation of that fictional writing through which the young women could potentially serve their own, and author their own reality. This repeats exactly at the level of the story Scott's own appropriation and subsequent suppression of feminine writing at the level of discourse. Scott asserts his authority over the novel by thus evoking and then suppressing domestic fiction within his text as surely as Ellieslaw asserts his over his daughter. *The Black Dwarf* thus repeats the process that we have already seen at work in *Guy Mannering*.

However, in *Guy Mannering* we saw how closure (the revelation of the truth of the kidnap and Brown's true identity) was brought about by a carrier of feminine fictionality, namely Meg Merrilies, despite this suppression. Does Elshie's power to end the plot properly come from a *feminine* artifice in a similar way? On the one hand, as we have seen, his intervention is prompted by Isabella to preserve her romantic intentions against the aggression of her father's political ones: to this extent at least his purpose is feminized. However, as we have also seen, Elshie's actions do not re-enclose the otherwise triumphant political plot of the Jacobites within a further plot, whose narrative middle it would then constitute. Elshie comes to the chapel at Ellieslaw not as a counter-conspirator, but as the redeemer of a pledge. That pledge he can redeem not with a plan of action, but simply with himself, with the knowledge of the history of his relations with Ellieslaw, with the person that he is in that regard.

Thus his capacity to fulfil his contract with Isabella is the same as Scott's ability to fulfil his hermeneutic contract with the reader, the promise implicit in the elision of Elshie's true identity and with it his true motives for settling on Meikle-stane Moor at the beginning of the novel.²⁰ And crucially, that identity, and those motives, are built around a woman. Lucy Ilderton is not the only woman who goes missing in the course of this text. When Isabella is kidnapped and Ellieslaw covers his tracks with a

²⁰ That Elshie was the murderer of Earnscliff's father is the one piece of information that is not made generally known in the fulfilment of the hermeneutic contract at the end of the novel. Earnscliff is never told this fact. It remains a secret between Isabella and the dwarf, a sign of their contract, something from which the hero is necessarily excluded.

partial explanation to Ratcliffe, Scott inserts a narratorial address to the reader:

. . . and while the Laird of Ellieslaw details to him, with the most animated gestures of grief and indignation, the singular adventures of the morning, we will take the opportunity to inform our readers of the relative circumstances in which these gentlemen stood to each other. (11.77.18-22)

In the following three paragraphs, however, the narrator makes no mention of the underlying basis of Ratcliffe and Ellieslaw's relationship, which is their mutual connection with Elshie, through *his* connection with the late Mrs Vere. Mrs Vere is indeed mentioned here for the first time in the novel, but we learn no more about her than that she died without any of Ellieslaw's present neighbours seeing her. This omission by the narrator of the centrality of Mrs Vere in Elshie's connection with Ratcliffe and Ellieslaw comes at just the point where Ellieslaw is pinning the blame for his own violence on the feminine discourse of Lucy Ilderton. Once again we see Scott and Ellieslaw doing similar things at the same time, telling part of the truth while suppressing the feminine, the former at the level of the discourse, the latter within the story.

When Elshie's voice sounds in the chapel at Ellieslaw, it does so from behind Mrs Vere's tomb, an effigy of her in marble. On the one hand, this is a metaphor for his role as replacement for feminine creative language in the novel: he is acting, as it were, from the place of a petrified feminine agency. On the other hand, it reminds us that he has been living for the entire course of the novel in the shadow of a stone that tradition, figured as female

here, accounts for as a witch, frozen in stone by the devil when she inadvertantly curses her wandering geese with the words "Deevil, that neither I nor they ever stir from this spot more!" (2.16.36-7). If this misuse of female performative speech were not enough to make a connection between the feminine discourse which Elshie replaces and his chosen dwelling place, Scott makes the link for us. This story comes from a tradition which has replaced historical truth "with a supplementary legend of her own", words which will be echoed in Isabella and Lucy's "supplemental conspiracy of our own" (5.40.37-8). Both tradition and the story told here place their origins in an act of female misgovernment, the latter in Mrs Vere's decision not to marry Elshie to whom she was engaged. Elshie arrives on Meikle-stane Moor to rediscover meaning in these events, to finally gather in the scattered geese on behalf of their original mistress. As in *Guy Mannering*, folk tradition parallels domestic fiction by bringing non-realistic, non-cognitive elements into Scott's historical fiction, while gaining a privileged place there, denied to feminine fiction, because unlike feminine fiction it is itself an object of knowledge for the cognitive text.

The consequence of this is that Scott's attempt to explain Elshie in entirely realistic terms fails. It is not that he has powers that go beyond the rationally explicable, as Meg Merrilies does; despite the place he takes in the local folk-culture, both during and after the story told here, he does not have any such powers. The hermeneutic contract, the promise that facts about the characters will finally be revealed which will make sense of their

foregoing actions, is also the promise that the witch and the supernatural are safely in the past. But the symbolism of stone and statue elude this contract, and point not to the conditions of action within the text, but to the conditions of the existence of the text itself. The gathering in of meaning, the bringing of things to closure, are the achievements of creativity, of fiction, and, because of the place of Scott's text with regard to female writing, these come under the sign of the feminine. The fact that the agent of this closure is here *male* (albeit an outcast and stigmatized male), rather than a female (albeit a very masculine female) as it is in *Guy Mannering*, suggests that the gender of that agent is not their distinguishing feature. What seems to mark their efforts in both novels is rather the need to put right the mistakes of the *mother*: the foolish Mrs Mannering with her little family novel, the mistaken Mrs Vere and her failure to wait for her betrothed, both barely present in these texts, passed over in silence, suppressed: and yet central to their plots. They are a condition of Scott's social-realist fiction, but cannot, it seems, be included within it, except as its edge, a sign for the limits of signification. It is to understand this edge of realism figured as mother that we must turn to the psychoanalytic theory of Julia Kristeva.

Before doing so, however, let me summarize the relation of social-realist discourse to feminine discourse as we have found it in these three early novels. The difference between them is not just the difference between the factual basis of Scott's stories and

the romance that he makes out of them: that is, between the enlightenment Scott and the romantic.²¹ Feminine discourse is indeed not concerned with objective reality, but sets itself in opposition to objective reality, rather than being added to it or transcending it or shining through it as the truth of the romantics does.

Nor is allowing feminine discourse a role in the meaning of these texts simply to recognize, with F. R. Hart, that "conventional character and situation" can have both "aesthetic justification" and "allowable thematic significance."²² For when he comes to describe what that significance might be, and asks "the one persistent question of Waverley criticism: the question of the function in the novels of the conventional domestic plot," we find that it is always a matter of its relation to the text's overriding social-realist purpose. Hart suggests three possible roles for the domestic plot: to provide "the inward -- that is, the qualitatively human -- dimension of history"; to provide "one pole for a dialectical or pendulous motion between public and private worlds and their conflicting demands"; and to function "as a metaphor or analogue to the public or historic," the allegorical function that we have already seen ascribed to Edward Waverley's marriage to Rose Bradwardine.²³ The first and last of

²¹ As described, for example, by F. A. Pottle: "Scott still perceived the world with eighteenth-century eyes. But we infer that he must have had a double vision . . . The romantic vision did not completely cover the field of the "real" world; there were some features (features corresponding to Scott's strong antiquarian and collecting interests) which appear in only one mode." "The Power of Memory in Boswell and Scott," A. Norman Jeffares (ed.) *Scott's Mind and Art* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969) 248.

²² Hart 6.

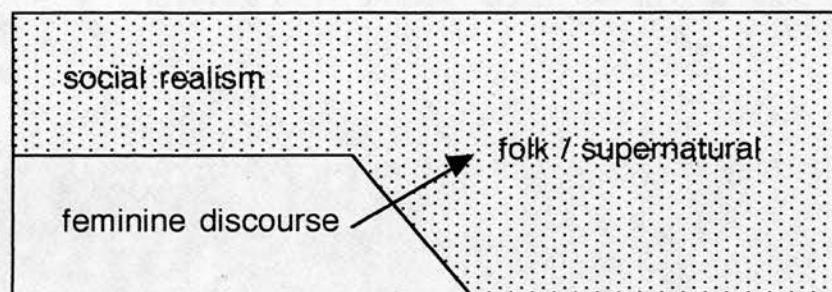
²³ Hart 11.

these functions subordinate the domestic to social reality: either the private life of the protagonist is within history, constitutes another historical actuality on the same objective level as public events; or it represents historical actuality allegorically. On the contrary, I have argued that feminine discourse is present in these novels as that which is outside socio-historical reality altogether; is neither a reported historical reality, nor itself reports or is an allegory of historical reality, but instead *creates* its own reality in opposition to the historical reality reported by the main body of the text.

Hart's second possible role for the domestic plot is more interesting. It suggests that these novels might include as a theme that distinction between public and private worlds, constructed as male and female spheres respectively in the course of the eighteenth century, and the valorization of the domestic sphere as the nurturing place for *both* genders at the beginning of the nineteenth, that we saw in Edgeworth's *Patronage* and has recently been the focus of increasing critical attention. This is perhaps true of *Waverley*, which as we have seen is about a domestic man such as any of Edgeworth's heroines might praise. But *Waverley* is in this exceptional. In *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, feminine discourse is not included in order to bring in the *themes* of the domestic novel, but to posit an autonomous feminine *authorship* in opposition to that implied by the social-realist discourse of the rest of the text. That Harry Bertram or Earnscliff will be happiest once they have put the public world of smugglers and Jacobites behind them to

concentrate on domestic pursuits is simply taken for granted. The function of feminine discourse in these two novels is not as the carrier of domestic virtue which the hero will eventually recognize, but as the carrier of an agency by which domestic settlement can eventually be achieved.

But although feminine discourse is the carrier of this agency, it cannot itself exercise it, precisely because of its alienation from the dominant social-realist discourse of these novels. The narrative pattern that we have uncovered is not a "conventional domestic plot" in Hart's terms, for it is a means of mediating between the domestic novel and Scott's new social-realist novel rather than being the plot of the former alone. It might be best represented graphically. Read from left to right, the diagram below represents the initial opposition of feminine and social realist discourses, followed by the disappearance of the former: the arrow represents the survival, as a describable object within a now uniformly social-realist discourse, of feminine fictionality as the folk-culture or supernatural agency of Meg Merrilies or Elshie the dwarf. If by the end of this thesis it appears that "The Waverley Novels" is indeed a misnomer, and that the Scottish ones at least might be better named "The *Mannerling* Novels," it is because most of them represent variations on the pattern illustrated here.



Chapter 4

Kristeva and the Novel: the Psychopathology of Realist Fiction

(i) A problem in Bakhtin

We have explored in the previous chapters the conjunction in Scott's early novels of two different discourses, modes of language which are adopted by the text from their already-existing use elsewhere. The obvious theorist to whom one might look for help in explaining what is happening when a novel includes within itself a variety of discourses in this way is Mikhail Bakhtin. Bakhtin's poetics of the novel identifies the novel's uniqueness as its ability to integrate within itself the multiplicity of "languages" within language, the various discourses (for example, legal, scientific, journalistic, and also literary) that make up language as it is actually used. "[T]his internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence is the indispensable prerequisite for the novel as a genre."¹ This social stratification internalized by the novel Bakhtin calls *heteroglossia*.

At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic dialects in the strict sense of the word (according to formal linguistic markers, especially phonetic), but also -- and for us this is the essential point -- into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, "professional" and "generic" languages, languages of generations and so forth. From this point of view, literary language itself is

¹ M. M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 263

only one of these heteroglot languages -- and in its turn is also stratified into languages (generic, period-bound and others).²

-- although, as we have said, the novel is distinct among literary genres in its capacity to include these other "genres" within itself, and so could be said to have no distinct generic language of its own. Of particular importance among the languages appropriated by the novel are what Bakhtin calls the rhetorical genres -- "journalistic, moral, philosophical and others" -- whose role in the development of the novel "was perhaps no less intense than was the novel's interaction with the artistic genres (epic, dramatic, lyric)."³

This focus on the rhetorical mode in language reveals what the notion of a "professional" language already implies: that a generically-differentiated language, a *discourse*, implies a particular social group as its audience. For example, scientific discourse follows certain patterns and conventions that limits and defines the readership of scientific journals. The readership of a scientific journal is also of course its authorship, for contributions and replies to articles must necessarily be written in the same style. This Bakhtin refers to as *monologic* discourse, as opposed to genuine dialogue. Hence, although such forms "are oriented toward the listener and his answer,"⁴ nevertheless they presume a certain passivity in that listener, an acquiescence in the terms of the discourse within which this exchange is taking place. "Therefore, insofar as the speaker operates with such a passive understanding,

² Bakhtin 271-2

³ Bakhtin 269

⁴ Bakhtin 280

nothing new can be introduced into his discourse"; indeed the speaker is left "in his own personal context, within his own boundaries."⁵ In other words, *monologic* discourse as described by Bakhtin is exactly what Foucault calls discourse; the mutual orientation of speaker and listener in monologic discourse is, in Foucault's terms, the construction by that discourse of a subject-position, an "enunciative modality."

An active understanding on the part of the listener, on the other hand,

... assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system ... It is precisely such an understanding that the speaker counts on. Therefore his orientation toward the listener is an orientation toward a specific conceptual horizon, toward the specific world of the listener; it introduces totally new elements into his discourse; it is in this way, after all, that various different points of view, conceptual horizons, systems for providing expressive accents, various social "languages" come to interact with one another.⁶

In other words, the interplay of different discourses within a text can be understood as following similar principles to the dialogue between individual subjects, individual points of view. The speaker's active orientation towards the other has become interchangeable with an author's orientation towards the discourse of an other that he includes in his text. This is one aspect of what Bakhtin calls the "internal dialogism of the word."

[I]nternal dialogization can become such a crucial force for creating form only where individual differences and contradictions are enriched by social heteroglossia, where dialogic reverberations do not sound in the semantic heights of discourse (as happens in the rhetorical genres) but penetrate the deep strata of discourse, dialogize language itself and the world view a particular language has (the internal form of discourse) --

⁵ Bakhtin 281

⁶ Bakhtin 282

where the dialogue of voices arises directly out of a social dialogue of "languages," where an alien utterance begins to sound like a socially alien language, where the orientation of the word among alien utterances changes into an orientation of the word among socially alien languages within the boundaries of one and the same national language.⁷

As Bakhtin writes, "It is as if the author has no language of his own."⁸

However, Bakhtin's theory is of limited use in accounting for the sort of interaction between discourses that we have seen in Scott's first novels. "Dialogue" in the novel seems to be very much a matter of the juxtaposition and mutual ironization of the discourses that it appropriates, rather than the more complicated dialectic that we have found at work in *Guy Mannering*, for example. Specifically, the incongruity of the feminine, performative speech with the masculine, cognitive discourse that we identified there is difficult to fit into Bakhtin's description of novelness. For Bakhtin, it is the common cognitive function of *all* discourse that provides the ground on which different discourses can be juxtaposed. "For the writer of artistic prose . . . the object reveals first of all precisely the socially heteroglot multiplicity of its names, definitions and value judgements . . . The word is shaped in dialogic interaction with an alien word that is already in the object."⁹ It is the fact that different discourses can be used to describe the same object that allows their combination to tell the same story in a novel. Only their common reference to a reality

⁷ Bakhtin 284-285

⁸ Bakhtin 311

⁹ Bakhtin 278-9

external to them makes it possible to combine them on the same level, as it were:

[A]ll languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words . . . As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another. . . ¹⁰

Now, I am not arguing that domestic fiction in its own right is somehow purely performative, and has no cognitive content. The domestic novel is obviously very much a specific point of view on the world. My point is rather that in *Guy Mannering*, it does not *function* as a point of view on the world: it is not "as such" that it is included within the novel. The basis of its inclusion is not an object of cognition shared with the novel's other discourse, but its capacity to do something else altogether. Of course, *narrative* discourses have perhaps a rather different status to those of other genres, if their reference is not an aspect of the world, but a *story*. It might be their common story that facilitates their juxtaposition,

¹⁰ Bakhtin 291-292. This common reference provided by an object at once beyond language but only accessible through it brings Bakhtin much closer to the structuralists than is often recognized. His common ground with the structuralists is even more pointed in that he makes mode of reference to "reality" or "world" that which defines a genre: "Each of these genres possesses its own verbal and semantic forms for assimilating various aspects of reality. The novel, indeed, utilizes these genres precisely because of their capacity, as well-worked-out forms, to assimilate reality in words" (Bakhtin 321). This comes very close to making reference to the world the ultimate meaning of a text, and genre a signal to the reader from the text about how that text is to be placed in relation to other texts, external and prior to it, in order for that reference to be decoded. Culler summarizes this position nicely: "A genre . . . is a conventional function of language, a particular relation to the world which serves as norm or expectation to guide the reader in his encounter with the text . . . [A]n account of genres should be an attempt to define the classes which have been functional in the processes of reading and writing, the sets of expectations which have enabled readers to naturalize texts and give them a relation to the world" (Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* 136).

rather than the world. But again, it is precisely their different relations to the story that distinguishes the two discourses of *Guy Mannering*.

Bakhtin also recognizes, in a contrary insight, that the very fact of a discourse's incorporation within the novelistic structure changes its intentional properties. Discourses, genres, come to mean in relation to each other as well as referentially.

Within these [professional, generic] points of view, that is, for the speakers of the language themselves, these generic languages and professional jargons are directly intentional . . . but outside . . . these languages may be treated as objects, as typifactions, as local color. For such outsiders, the intentions permeating these languages become *things* . . . ¹¹

But Bakhtin's words here sail over depths that they do not plumb. The intentions permeating feminine discourse in *Waverley*, in *Guy Mannering*, and in *The Black Dwarf* are treated in just this way: as a thing, as a special type of object. But what might it be, to treat a *discourse* as an *object*? It is to answer this question that I want now to turn to psychoanalytic theory, and in particular the work of Julia Kristeva. It is there that we shall find a better model for the interdiscursive relations of these texts than we have found in Bakhtin.

¹¹ Bakhtin 289

(ii) The background to Kristeva's later theory

Jacques Lacan

Essential for an understanding of any aspect of Kristeva's work is a basic grasp of Jaques Lacan's reinterpretation of Freud in linguistic terms. Freud, in the most influential formulation of his ideas, distinguished three agencies at work in the human psyche: the *id*, the instinctual drives of the body to fulfil its various needs and functions; the *ego*, which develops in the course of these drives' frustrating encounter with the outside world, to resist and regulate them so that they can achieve fulfilment without becoming counter-productive e.g. without threatening the survival of the organism for the sake of short-term satisfaction (the ego is thus a sort of means-ends rationality); and the superego, parental and social influences as they recast the objects of the drives. In the development of the individual infant, the *id* is obviously there from the start: I shall glance at the way in which the other two develop in Freud's theory later, when I examine the use that Kristeva makes of it.

Lacan recasts this three-part division of the mind in his own terms, which leave him with a rather different picture of infant development. The role of the superego in imposing from without a system of prohibitions, a law, on the psyche itself, is effected simply by the child's learning language: for a language includes within its own structure, within the way that it divides up the world, a set of social presuppositions and judgements about the

world. To learn a language is to find oneself apart from the world and constrained in one's relations with it by the possibilities available within that language. That which Freud calls the superego Lacan calls the *symbolic*, and its prescriptive aspect is referred to by Lacan, with a nod to its Oedipal origins, as the *law of the father*.

". . . [I]t is the symbolic order which is constitutive for the subject."¹² The ego is for Lacan nothing more nor less than the subject-position offered by language, the way in which "I" can work within speech. (This is perhaps a less surprising move if one remembers that what "the ego" translates in Freud's German is simply "das Ich.") The symbolic thus encompasses both the ego and the superego as Freud uses those terms. Even the drives and needs of the body (the material self, Freud's id renamed by Lacan as the *real*) are displaced within the symbolic by *desire*. All that cannot be accounted for entirely within the symbolic is the nature of desire itself, that which moves the subject to speech in the first place and then keeps it speaking. And this has to be understood in terms of the history of the pre-linguistic infant's *entry* into the symbolic.

The human child's first months are spent entirely in the realm of the real. World and self are not distinguished as language will later distinguish them: the child's experience is simply of want and the satisfaction of want, and the mother is no more than the possibility of that satisfaction. At the maternal breast, life has an unconsciousness and unity that it will never have again. The

¹² Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on *The Purloined Letter*," *Yale French Studies* 48 (1972): 40

child's discovery that the mother is not merely a function of its needs but has needs of her own dissolves this oblivion. It is the discovery of self and other, of the difference in identity, yet equivalence in need, of mother and child, and is the seed crystal of subjectivity and language. Yet it also creates a sense of lack in the child, a split or *Spaltung* between its want and the source of that want's fulfilment, when before these had been part of an undifferentiated mass of sensations.¹³ If the mother has her own wants, they might be different from the child's: with the child's consciousness of its own want comes permanent uncertainty about the want of the (m)other.¹⁴ In addition to particular wants, it now also wants to lose this uncertainty and regain the sense of wholeness that it had previously enjoyed at the breast.

Once it is inscribed as a subject in the symbolic, the nature of the posited union with the (m)other is changed. The child's relation to its mother is now constituted, says Lacan, "not by his vital dependence on her [his *want*], but by his dependence on her love, that is to say, by the desire for her desire."¹⁵ As the child recognized in its mother a being who wanted as it wanted but not necessarily *what* it wanted, so the speaking subject recognizes in the other a subject who desires as it desires. It is indeed the attempt to discover what the mother wants that propels the child

¹³ I shall henceforth use "want" to signify that which begins as a consciousness of bodily *need* on the infant's part and develops into a self-constituting sense of continual *lack*, before that lack is replaced with desire strictly-speaking by entry into the symbolic.

¹⁴ By (m)other I similarly signify that figure who is not yet fully other as she will be in the symbolic, or (alternatively) that proto-other who is still largely the mother of the child.

¹⁵ Lacan, "On a question preliminary to any possible treatment of psychosis," *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (1977; London: Routledge 1989) 198.

into speech and subjectivity. The subject's underlying desire, whatever the immediate object in which it seeks the fulfilment of that desire, is for absolute recognition in the other's identical desire. It seeks the perfect return of its desire from the other. Entry into the symbolic is thus entry into dialogue with the other.

[M]an's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.¹⁶

The form in which language is expressed itself defines subjectivity . . . [I]t refers itself to the discourse of the other. As such it is enveloped in the highest function of speech, in as much as speech commits its author by investing the person to whom it is addressed with a new reality, as for example, when by a "You are my wife", a subject marks himself with the seal of wedlock . . .

What I seek in speech is the response of the other. What constitutes me as subject is my question. In order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name that he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me.

. . . [I]f I call the person to whom I am speaking by whatever name I choose to give him, I intimate to him the subjective function that he will take on again in order to reply to me, even if it is to repudiate that function.¹⁷

When we speak, our speech places both ourselves as subjects and the other to whom it is addressed in their mutual relation by the way in which it deploys grammatical subjectivity: but this is governed in turn by our expectation of the other's reply, and all we have on which to base this expectation is the previous utterance of the other. Their reply will alter this expectation, and so on. Because we exist as subjects only as a place in this intersubjective dialogue, the nature of that place is always provisional on the reply of the other. We wait to hear the place that we have assigned

¹⁶ Lacan, "The function and field of speech and language . . ." *Écrits* 58.

¹⁷ Lacan, "The function" *Écrits* 85-87.

ourselves in this discourse repeated in the speech of the other, but because the place afforded us in the speech of the other is itself provisional on *our* reply, this will never be finally affirmed. My meaning returns to me from the other, but always marked by the other. *The subject is constituted by the symbolic not only in dialogue with the other, but in infinite dialogue with the other.* This sort of dialogue is thus fundamentally different from that described by Bakhtin: for Bakhtin, the speaking subject could appropriate the language of the other without this anxiety about how the other was likely to re-appropriate the subject's speech in reply.

Language, on Lacan's view, is thus always fundamentally performative as well as cognitive: an utterance always has a function as well as a reference, always split between the meaning afforded it by its utilization of vocabulary and grammar, and its signification of the desire that motivates it.

For the signifier, by its very nature, always anticipates meaning by unfolding its dimension before it . . . it is in the chain of the signifier that meaning "insists" but . . . none of its elements "consists" in the signification of which it is at the moment capable.¹⁸

Lacan calls the object of this desire the *objet petit a*, an object signified not by any particular word or utterance but by the subject's movement along the chain of discourse that it causes. In Saussure's terms, it is a signified that makes its presence felt in discourse by the movement that it forces from signifier to signifier,

¹⁸ Lacan, "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud," *Écrits* 153.

but which can never be fixed under any particular signifier. It slips, so to speak, under the chain of signifiers.

What this structure of the signifying chain discloses is the possibility I have, precisely in so far as I have this language in common with other subjects, that is to say, in so far as it exists as a language, to use it in order to signify *something quite other* than what it says . . .¹⁹

This "something quite other," it must be remembered, is not a drive or a need or some other organic constituent of the *real*. It is indeed, like the real, beyond signification: but it is produced by the subject's position in language *as such*, its subjection to the symbolic, and not by bodily need. It is a consequence, not of the real, but of the loss of the real.

What I have so far avoided is any mention of the father in Lacan's theory. It is of course the father who forces the entry of the child into language, since it is through awareness of the mother's desire for the father that the child can first conceive of the mother as truly other. The child's entry into the symbolic order is facilitated by the example of the father as an object of the mother's desire, the promise that this is a possible position (before the child realizes that its parents, too, can only pursue their desire through signifiers). The child, in other words, *identifies* with the father: this provides some immediate compensation for the loss of unity with the mother, in the form of a promise of future reunification in mutual desire.

A condition for this identification is however some sort of nascent, pre-linguistic sense of self. It is to account for this

¹⁹ Lacan, "The agency" 155.

necessity that Lacan theorizes the *mirror-stage*, when, from seeing its reflection in a mirror or from some other source, the infant identifies itself as the discrete physical unit of which it perceives the image. This is a self that is complete and self-sufficient. It has not emerged with a sense of an other: the image responds immediately to the infant's movements, as (it still assumes) the mother does. The possession of this primitive sense of selfhood allows the child to identify with the similarly self-sufficient seeming father. Identification with an image constitutes Lacan's third psychic register, the *imaginary*. Like the pre-linguistic real, the proto-linguistic imaginary has no lasting effect on the healthy subject other than initially projecting him into subjectivity and the symbolic in the first place.

The semiotic

When Julia Kristeva first brought Lacan's ideas to bear on literature, she ignored the imaginary as a category and instead explored the ways in which the real, the instincts and drives associated with the maternal that she renamed the *semiotic*, continued to impinge on the language of the speaking subject despite their repression at the oedipal stage. Lacan describes a situation where the body's drives have either been replaced or wholly effaced by entry into the symbolic: yet the body itself survives the construction of symbolic subjectivity. Kristeva draws on the terminology of the linguist Emile Benveniste to distinguish two aspects of the speaking subject: the subject of

utterance (*sujet de l'énoncé*), which is constructed entirely by the vocabulary and grammar rules of the language that it speaks; and the subject of enunciation (*sujet de l'énonciation*), the concrete speaker in an actual discursive context, where shifters like "I" and "you" have concrete meanings. The Lacanian symbolic seems to have room only for the former. But the latter, Kristeva argues, can produce effects in that discourse which are neither pure signifiers, nor the result of the subject's now-remote construction by the signifier. What Lacan calls "something quite other" is after all not *that* other to the symbolic, since it is its condition and origin. The semiotic is on the contrary *radically* other. Because the subject of enunciation is embodied, physical drives, left behind in infancy according to Lacan, and still a reminder of infantile unity with the mother according to Kristeva, can find expression through language and in spite of its logical syntactic structure. The speaking subject, participating at once in both registers, is thus not only a grammatical construct, but both that and something else: it is essentially heterogeneous.

Yet, while we continue to understand the subject, however split, as always addressing an *other* of some description, it is difficult to see how the semiotic could be genuinely external to the symbolic order. Dialogue only proceeds on the presumption by both parties that their speech is at least *potentially* meaningful for the other, however uncertain the precise meaning that they draw from it may be. Signification, the interaction of signifier and signified, is made possible in spoken dialogue (as elsewhere) by the utilization of codifiable and logically structured

grammatical rules and a ready-formed vocabulary, in other words by the symbolic order. Kristeva posits a category of meaning wider than signification that the body can generate independently of the rules of the symbolic. Yet it is hard to see how this meaning could be even potentially or partially comprehensible to an other unless *either* it was purely negative, a disruption of linguistic signification acting only as a reminder of something beyond language; *or* it was itself a product of some differential system or other: not the syntactic rules and vocabulary that one would find in grammars or dictionaries, but a perfectly codifiable linguistic system nonetheless. Any such system registers itself as symbolic, and the subject who uses it as subject to the law of the father. In either case, the existence of the symbolic seems to be a pre-condition for the semiotic to be meaningful. If the semiotic has a content independent from linguistic structures, then it is difficult to see how their effects in language can be meaningful: if it does not, and its effects in language are purely negative, then it is difficult to see how it is truly *other* to the symbolic.

That this problem of semiotic autonomy vitiates Kristeva's early theory is a great pity, for such a theory seems much more promising in its application to literary criticism than Lacan's. It seems more promising precisely to the extent that the constituting role of intersubjective dialogue as understood by Lacan has slipped into the background, and the interlocutor's role as the subject's constituting other has been taken instead by the subject's own semiotic. It seems more promising because, as we

have seen in the case of Scott, a literary text is not necessarily written as a contribution to an intersubjective dialogue: it is not necessarily constructed in the expectation of any particular response from any particular reader. Kristeva's theory instead posits an otherness that is internal to the utterance itself, a heterogeneity that is not the consequence of a provisional anticipation of an other's response to that utterance.

However, the extra-symbolic nature of the heterogeneous elements described by Kristeva under the heading of the semiotic does not well describe the heterogeneity that we have seen at work in Scott. The impact of the semiotic on the text as Kristeva describes it appears in extra-syntactic patterns of sound and rhythm, and these are obviously more central to poetry than to prose. Kristeva developed the theory of the semiotic, indeed, in a doctoral thesis on early modernist poetry.²⁰ There is indeed in Kristeva's early work a sharp dichotomy between those essays in which she engages with the work of Bakhtin, and those in which she applies her own theories to novels.

In the latter category is her discussion of Philippe Sollers' *H*, a modernist novel which seems to exhibit precisely those qualities that Kristeva categorizes as semiotic. Not surprisingly, it is the poetic aspects of this text that Kristeva celebrates, rather than its novelistic ones. Her explication of *H* in fact repeats the dilemma we have outlined in the preceding paragraph in theoretical terms. The account she gives of how the absence of punctuation in Sollers' text engages the body in its "music" by

²⁰ Published in English as *Revolution in Poetic Language*.

increasing the importance of breath in dividing up the text raises the same question of the autonomy of the semiotic:

By *music*, I mean intonation and rhythm, which play only a subordinate role in everyday communication but here constitute the essential element of enunciation and lead us directly to the otherwise silent place of its subject . . .²¹

Networks of alliteration . . . establish trans-sentence paths that are superimposed over the linear sequences of clauses and introduce into the logical-syntactic memory of the text a phonetic-instinctual memory. . . . [S]entence sequences still manage to become established, defined in reading by a *single breathing motion*, which results in a *generally rising intonation*. This breathing thus sustains a succession of sentences, simultaneously unified by meaning (a *position of the subject of enunciation*) and significance (a *virtual denotation*). A breathing movement thus coincides with the attitude of the speaking subject and the fluctuating range of denotation. The next breathing movement introduces the speaking subject's new attitude and a new sphere of denotation. The human body and meaning, inseparable as they are, thus fashion a dismembered score . . .²²

The emphasis on the reading voice, on the materiality of language, seems perfectly appropriate given the type of novel *H* is. Kristeva claims here that it is the body's role in reading, rather than grammar, that governs how sentences are grouped in the text, and that enunciation thus determines significance rather than the other way round.

However, the passages quoted leave open the question of whether or not every body will take a breath at the same place, and thus divide up the text in the same way. If it really is the subject of enunciation who determines the significance of the

²¹ Julia Kristeva, "The Novel as Polylogue" in *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Art and Literature*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez, ed. Leon S. Roudiez (1980; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981) 167

²² Kristeva, "The Novel as Polylogue," *Desire in Language* 169

text, then that intervention will be different for an athlete and an asthmatic. If on the contrary every body does take a breath at the same place, it surely must be because there is something in the sentences themselves, in, as Kristeva suggests, their sound patterns, that determines where that is. The phonetic system of a language, for all its materiality, is after all as much a differential system as its grammar: the law of the father decides what counts as the same sound with which an alliteration works. What Kristeva calls "music," the material pattern of language, indeed has a positive input into the meaning of the text, but it is a music that is generated within the symbolic, and not by the body itself.

The same attempt to recast a diversity within the symbolic as a relation to the extra-linguistic recurs in Kristeva's insistence that the groups of sentences formed by sound and breathing are not distinguishable as different *discourses*. While a breathing movement or the phonetic patterns that govern it might mark the boundaries of a particular subject position in the text, they can hardly determine the nature of that subject position. If a particular type of subject position is created in a group of sentences, then its difference from other subject positions is created by differences between that group and other groups of sentences. A heterogeneity of subject attitudes and denotative modes is a heterogeneity within the symbolic. Kristeva tries to assimilate this heterogeneity to that introduced, as she describes it, by the semiotic:

I shall assume that a precise type of signifying practice, based on a *request* and an *exchange of information*, embeds the speaking subject within the limits of sentence enunciation; but other signifying practices

that have jouissance as their goal . . . would necessitate the pursuit of signifying operations beyond the limits of the sentence. We have seen that these signifying operations . . . prevent the speaking subject from being fixed in a single or unified position -- rather, they multiply it. Thus, instinctual rhythm becomes logical rhythm.

It is not enough to say that, thanks to these operations, the sentence gains access to a higher domain, that is, to *discourse*. For discourse might be (as in fact is the case) a simple concatenation of sentences (whose logic remains to be determined), without ever requiring of the subject of enunciation a shift as to *his position in relation to his speech act*. Yet this is precisely what happens in *H*. Not only is there a juxtaposition of different ideological or communicative positions (sender, addressee, illocution, presupposition), but also a juxtaposition of utterances that record the various stratifications of the genotext (instinctual drive, resonant rhythm, syntactic and metalinguistic positions and their inversions).

. . . Their true power [that of meaning and signification] is built up only on the basis of the numerated, phrased infinity of a polylogical "discourse" of a multiplied, stratified, and heteronomous subject of enunciation.²³

What Kristeva has demonstrated is not that "instinctual rhythm becomes logical rhythm" but that there is a rhythm of alternating logics; not that the shifts in subject position "record the various stratifications of the genotext," of the heteronomous speaking subject, but that the whole text's speaking subject cannot be identified with any of the available subject positions. If we accept with Bakhtin that the distinguishing feature of the novel is its capacity to juxtapose a variety of denotative discourses, then the heterogeneity of *H* as Kristeva describes it is not a *novellistic* heterogeneity. *H*, in her view, is heterogeneous *in spite of* being a novel; heterogeneous because it is at once a novel and something else.²⁴

²³ Kristeva, "The Novel as Polylogue," *Desire in Language* 172-3

²⁴ For Kristeva, the mere fact of the novel's narrative form limits it, like the sentence, to the denotative and the social. In *H*, "[W]e are no longer talking about *poetry* (a return to the neat side of syntactic articulation, a pleasure of merging with a rediscovered, hypostatized maternal body); nor about *narrative* (the fulfilment of a request, the exchange of information, the isolation of an ego amenable to transference, imagining, and symbolizing). In the narrative, the speaking subject constitutes itself as

Oddly enough, the passage quoted above reveals a congruity between the word "discourse" as it is used by Kristeva here and as we have seen it used by Foucault, in that both take it to name a particular type of language defined by its cognitive function, independently of any performative function it might also have. More generally, in fact, Kristeva here and Foucault in *The Archeology of Knowledge* are concerned to isolate the performative impact of the text on a different level from its discourse(s). This they do in very different ways, of course: for Foucault, the text acts by altering the relation of its discourse to other discourses; for Kristeva, the text of *H* acts by producing semiotic responses in the reader's body that is apparently quite independent of the various cognitive discourses that it simultaneously deploys. In neither case is it suggested that the text might have a performative effect by the combination of discourses within itself. Yet this is what we have seen happening in Scott. It is only when Kristeva discusses Bakhtin that such a possibility is theorized.

the subject of a family, clan, or state group; it has been shown that the syntactically normative sentence develops within the context of prosaic and, later, historic narration. The simultaneous appearance of *narrative* genre and *sentence* limits the signifying process to an attitude of request and communication" ("The Novel as Polylogue" *Desire in Language* 174). The sentence, and the narrative sequence, cannot here carry a performative charge just by being the sort of narrative or sentence that they are. Tilottama Rajan notes how in Kristeva's early work, "The dichotomizing of poetry as semiotic and narrative as symbolic is the symptomatic site of this inability to mediate between the two orders." "Trans-Positions of Difference: Kristeva and Post-structuralism" in Kelly Oliver (ed.), *Ethics, Politics and Difference in Julia Kristeva's Writing* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993) 230-31.

Kristeva on Bakhtin

Bakhtin's "carnival" must have had a part in forming Kristeva's concept of an autonomous semiotic, but on the whole her early essays on Bakhtin are free of this tendency to associate the intra-symbolic, inter-discursive heterogeneity explored in his work with the symbolic/semiotic contrast posited by hers. In "Word, Dialogue and Novel," she can indeed write, "The poetic word, polyvalent and multi-determined, adheres to a logic exceeding that of codified discourse . . ." and imply that by the last expression she means *any* codified discourse, where Bakhtin would say that the polyvalency of the novelistic word comes not from its adherence to an extra-discursive logic (Kristeva's semiotic), but from its simultaneous adherence to two or more; and "The Ruin of a Poetics" makes a few inconsequential allusions to Freud.²⁵ "Word, Dialogue and Novel" is fascinating rather because Kristeva here redescribes Bakhtin's concept of textual dialogue in terms of enunciative subjectivity. Intersubjective dialogue thus receives a level of attention here that is unique in her writing. What is important for our purposes is the way in which this attention to dialogue seems *demanded* by the fact that it is the novel under discussion.

We have seen how in her discussion of *H* Kristeva locates enunciation in the body of the speaker, and constituted the speaker in their relation to their pre-linguistic drives, rather than

²⁵ Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966: published 1969) in *Desire in Language* 65; "The Ruin of a Poetics" in *Russian Formalism* ed. Stephen Bann and John Bowlit (Edinburgh: Scottish University Press, 1973).

in relation to another speaking subject, an interlocutor. In this essay Kristeva reinstates the intersubjective as the place of speech: but she does so only to describe its abolition in the written text. What fills the place of enunciation, the place that is filled in other essays by the speaker's body (and thus the semiotic), is the writer's relation to his addressee. And this, crucially, is what is replaced by quotation, by intertextuality:

The word's status is thus defined *horizontally* (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as *vertically* (the word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or synchronic literary corpus).

The addressee, however, is included within a book's discursive universe only as discourse itself. He thus fuses with this other discourse, this other book, in relation to which the writer has written his own text. Hence horizontal axis (subject - addressee) and vertical axis (text - context) coincide, bringing to light an important fact: each word (text) is an intersection of word (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read. In Bakhtin's work, these two axes, which he calls *dialogue* and *ambivalence*, are not clearly distinguished. Yet, what appears as a lack of rigor is in fact an insight first introduced into literary theory by Bakhtin: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*.²⁶

At pp.74-76 ("The inherent dialogism of denotative or historical words") she goes on to describe how this might happen, and how even apparently non-carnavalesque texts constitute a dialogue, because (and not in spite of) the absence of the real reader (and thus the real writer) from the text. Because the addressee is both within the text (as addressee strictly speaking: a signifier) and outside it (as real reader: a signified), that is, because there is a split between addressee and real reader ("The addressee . . . is included in a book's discursive universe only as discourse itself"), there is a similar split between narrator/ character (subject of

²⁶ Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel" in *Desire in Language* 66

utterance) and the writer, understood by the reader as "author" (that is, implied author: the subject of enunciation). This latter split thus makes possible the disappearance of the subject of enunciation into an anonymity, a "blank," as a deployer of discourses that is not constituted by any of them. In other words, the absence of an embodied addressee allows the subject of enunciation to move to the edge of the symbolic, to be inscribed in the text as a condition of its possibility rather than as the subject position of any particular one of its discourses. Intersubjectivity is replaced by interdiscursivity as constituting the text.²⁷

This is precisely the process that we have already seen at work in Scott's early fiction. But Kristeva does not generate this model within her own early theory of literature, and cannot develop it within that theory, for as we have seen, that theory cannot really encompass the novel without assimilating it to poetry. It is only in her later work, in *Powers of Horror* (1980; in English 1982) and *Tales of Love* (1983; in English 1987) that a theory emerges that could account for this structure in developed psychoanalytic terms, and thus provides a basis for the psychoanalytic theory of the novel (or at least of the *realist* novel) that I am trying to sketch here.

²⁷ Kristeva makes the same suggestion in the later "Ruin of a Poetics": "In this plurivocality the word/discourse does not have a fixed meaning (the syntactic and semantic unity are shattered by the voices and the accents of the "others"); it does not have a fixed user in order to maintain the fixity of the meaning (for Bakhtin's "Man" is no more than the focus of words being addressed -- of a desire?); it has no unitary listener to hear it . . ." (*Russian Formalism* 109). The question added to the parentheses leaves open the possibility of a psychoanalytic dimension to this process.

(iii) Kristeva and Freud on primary narcissism

This new availability of Kristeva's theory for criticism of the novel in her later work is only made possible by its replacement of the semiotic with the imaginary as the symbolic's constituting other. We have glanced at the (marginal) place of identification in Lacan's theory: Kristeva's development of it within her own is very much a return to Freud, particularly in her positing, like Freud, two identificatory stages in the development of the infant, preliminary to the formation of the superego and the ego respectively. It is the notion of *primary* narcissism, from which the superego (and thus language) first develops, that is central to Kristeva's argument.

Let us first examine exactly what Freud and Kristeva mean by "identification." In "The Ego and the Id" (1923), Freud describes how the ego, or in our terms the *subject*, can only appear after the infant has developed a capacity to distinguish between itself and its others, between what will become its *ego* and what will become its *objects*. The ego in fact develops from the loss of the object of its most basic attachment, the mother. Shocked by this sense of loss, or rather by the newly revealed contingency of the object's presence, the child regains a sense of security by *identifying* with the lost object: it places the object of its love within itself, as it were, where its absence is not a possibility. In other words, the child overcomes the loss of an external object of love by creating an internal equivalent, a "self" that is also an object of its love. This internalized ("introjected")

love object is the *ego*, which from now on will seek through speech to make itself the object of an other's love too.

[A]n object which was lost has been set up again inside the ego -- that is . . . an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification.²⁸

It may be that this identification is the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects . . . the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes . . . it contains the history of those object-choices.²⁹

This transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido is *secondary narcissism*. It is an abandonment of sexual aims, their redirection, *sublimation*, rather than repression.

However, as we have noted above, the emergence of the ego (i.e. the subject in language) depends upon a prior distinction of self and (m)other, a pre-linguistic cognition of the mother as proto-object. It is to explain how this pre-objectal self comes into being that Freud posits a *primary narcissism*, which generates the super-ego or ego-ideal:

But, whatever the character's later capacity for resisting the influences of abandoned object-cathexes may turn out to be, the effects of the first identifications made in earliest childhood will be general and lasting. This leads us back to the origin of the ego-ideal; for behind it there lies hidden an individual's first and most important identification, his identification with the father in his own personal prehistory. This is apparently not in the first instance the consequence or outcome of an object-cathexis; it is a direct and immediate identification and takes place earlier than any object-cathexis.³⁰

²⁸ Sigmund Freud, "The Ego and the Id" (1923) in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, The Penguin Freud Library, vol. 11 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984) 367

²⁹ Freud, "The Ego," *On Metapsychology* 368

³⁰ Freud, "The Ego," *On Metapsychology* 370

However, this means that primary "identification" cannot be understood in terms of introjected objects as secondary identification can: when the Ego Ideal/Superego is produced by identification with the Father, in *primary* narcissism, before love-objects proper can be said to exist for the child, what exactly is the child identifying *with*? And what is the loss that might demand this identification as compensation? That Freud skates over this point is significant, a repression within Freud's text itself: Kristeva refers to it as "that Freudian aporia called primal repression."³¹ Freud hints at what this aporia might hide in "Repression" (1915).

[T]he objects to which men give most preference, their ideals, proceed from the same perceptions and experiences as the objects which they most abhor . . . [I]t is possible for the original instinctual representative to be split in two, one part undergoing repression, while the remainder, precisely on account of this intimate connection, undergoes idealization.³²

The theoretical content of *Powers of Horror* and *Tales of Love* is best understood as Kristeva's attempt to construct a model of *primary* narcissism on the basis of the materials that Freud has left at her disposal, namely, the theory of *secondary* narcissism. In the former book she tries to understand whatever it is that is lost to provoke primary narcissism on a parallel with the "object" that is lost to provoke secondary narcissism. It is this "whatever" that she calls the *abject*: "To each ego its object, to each superego its abject."³³ However, Kristeva's conclusion, in

³¹ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 13

³² Freud, "Repression," *On Metapsychology* 150

³³ Kristeva, *Tales of Love* 2

Powers of Horror, is that that which is lost, the abject, is not and cannot be identified with or introjected, precisely because of its non-objectal status. What is originally sublimated to become the abject is the *mother*:

The abject confronts us . . . with our earliest attempts to release the hold of *maternal* entity [sic] even before ex-isting outside of her, thanks to the autonomy of language . . . a reluctant struggle against what, having been the mother, will turn into an abject.³⁴

However, it must be remembered that this is neither the semiotic mother, that with which the infant is unified before any sense of possible disunity, nor the mother as figure of identification in the entry into language. The abject mother is rather loss without subject to lose or object to be lost, as subject and object construct, and are constructed in, language: it is that which is lost in order to make language possible. As such it remains as the edge of language, as the edge of subjectivity, after entry into the symbolic:

[A]ll abjection is in fact recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded . . . [I]f one imagines . . . the experience of *want* itself as logically preliminary to being and object . . . then one understands that abjection, and even more so abjection of self, is its only signified.³⁵

The abject might then appear as the most *fragile* (from a synchronic point of view), the most *archaic* (from a diachronic one) sublimation of an "object" still inseparable from drives. The abject is that pseudo-object that is made up *before* but appears only *within* the gaps of secondary repression. *The abject would thus be the "object" of primal repression.*³⁶

³⁴ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 13

³⁵ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 5

³⁶ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 12

If, on Kristeva's parallel between primary and secondary narcissism, the abject mother is the equivalent of the lost love-object, we are left with two further questions. First, with what does the infant "identify" as compensation for its loss of the abject? The loss of the abject cannot be compensated for by its imaginary introjection and identification as the loss of the love object is (in the formation of the ego) precisely because it is not an object. The child cannot then identify with the abject mother. Freud suggests an alternative answer when he posits a pre-objectal identification with the father (see above, pp. 217-8). But in what sense might the father not be an object? Kristeva makes a distinction between the father as potential love-object (and *Tales of Love* explores the way in which a capacity for love develops from an infant identification with an imagined father) and an undifferentiated Other, the super-ego, for which the father might stand:

I experience abjection only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be "me." Not at all an other with whom I identify and incorporate, but an Other who precedes and possesses me, and through such possession causes me to be . . . a being-there of the symbolic that a father might or might not embody. Significance is indeed inherent in the human body.³⁷

The second question we must answer concerns the nature of the proto-subject's relation to this compensatory "Other." Freud distinguishes between sexual object-choice and identification by saying that the former consists in wanting to *have* someone else, where the latter consists in wanting to *be* someone else.

³⁷ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 10

"[I]dentification endeavours to mould a person's own ego after the fashion of one that has been taken as a model."³⁸ But Kristeva, in the passage just quoted, seems to be suggesting a third option: *being possessed by something else*, a relation in which I do not have something else, nor exist as something else, but simply exist, for the first time, as it were, before there is any other "I," any ego, to distinguish me from this Other. This is a sort of imitation, indeed, but a very particular one. It is an imitation of the other's (the father's) *language*. The first "identification" that calls me into being, before I can identify a linguistic self with a linguistic other, is with language as such: "a being-there of the symbolic," *language as an "object."*

This archaic identification, which is characteristic of the oral phase of the libido's organization where what I incorporate is what I become, where *having* amounts to *being*, is not, truly speaking, objectal. I identify, not with an object, but with what offers itself to me as a *model*.

. . . On what ground, within what material does *having* switch over to *being*? . . . [I]ncorporating and introjecting orality's function is the essential substratum of what constitutes man's being, namely, *language*. When the object that I incorporate is the speech of the other -- precisely a nonobject, a pattern, a model -- I bind myself to him in a primary fusion, communion, unification. An identification. . . . In being able to receive the other's words, to assimilate, repeat, and reproduce them, I become like him: One. A subject of enunciation.³⁹

Note that in this repetition or reproduction of the other's speech, there is no possibility of that speech being altered by the subject's desire as there is in mature intersubjective discourse. This is a perfect appropriation of the other's speech, or at least an

³⁸ Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego" in *Civilization, Society and Religion*, The Penguin Freud Library, vol. 12 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985) 135

³⁹ Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) 25-26

appropriation of speech that is perfect because there is not yet an other; because the subject of enunciation is as yet only that, and not a grammatical subject with a speech of its own, capable of distinguishing "I" and "you." The only alteration in that speech is in that which makes the subject a subject of enunciation, namely, the different place from which that enunciation is made. This leaves the appropriated speech marked by the fact of its appropriation, but not by desire.

It is thus that Kristeva is able to argue in *Tales of Love* for the possibility that a resting place might be found in the signifying chain described by Lacan in the mutual recognition of subject by subject that we call love. Identification remains a possibility, just as abjection remains a possibility, after entry into the symbolic. The object of desire, the *objet petit a*, is called into being by the emergence of the grammatical subject: the object of love is possible by a return to a type of relation older than the grammatical subject, and a condition of its emergence. In intersubjective dialogue, one thing is never identified as another, a desire never certainly the desire of the other, for any identification is always provisional on its affirmation by the other. The speech of my love, however, is the perfect reproduction of mine: they are the same thing, interchangeable, indistinguishable. Identification, whether that of primary or secondary narcissism, or of Kristeva's "love," is always a type of (the archetype of) *cognition*: its speech precedes or steps outside intersubjective dialogue to claim or achieve a reference to something independent of language.

However, this return happens when subject and object of identification, of love, are grammatical subject and object *as well*. That they are both within the symbolic means that language is always there to maintain their separate existence despite everything: this is an identification of pre-existing entities. For the pre-symbolic child's encounter with the Other, this is not the case. In *this* relationship, one term does not yet exist except as a body, a place, and the other is language itself. I have said that primary narcissism constitutes a perfect appropriation of the other's speech, or at least an appropriation of speech that is perfect because there is not yet an other. Equally, it is an appropriation of language as such, or at least, as Kristeva suggests, an appropriation *by* language as such, since there is not yet a subject doing the appropriating. "In short, identification causes the subject to exist within the signifier of the Other . . ."40

(iv) Primary narcissism and the novel

Let us quickly summarize. The subject speaks in intersubjective dialogue, according to Lacan, uncertain as to the signification of his utterance. The signified moves under his discourse with the other: that discourse is a performance, in which subject and other are constantly positing and re-positing each other, rather than a signification of each other as realities independent of their speech. For Kristeva, the subject and the

⁴⁰ Kristeva, *Tales of Love* 37

love-object speak with a certainty about what they mean: their equivalence fixes the signified under a particular signifier, and their speech can become genuinely referential. However, in primary narcissism, in which this relationship is grounded, the certainty of this signification, of this reference, of this *cognition*, has a curious status, because the "object" of cognition is language itself. Signification is certain not because its signified already and certainly exists, but because signification, the Other, has brought it into existence in the first place. The possibility of reference is dependent on an act, a performance, on the part of one who is first constituted by that act.⁴¹ And this affirmation of cognition by performance depends upon the abjection of the mother.

This seems to describe exactly the situation of the speaking subject of the novel as we discovered him in Bakhtin and in Kristeva's essays on Bakhtin: *a "subject" that does not exist except in so far as an appropriated discourse calls him into being.*⁴² If this is indeed the situation of the novel's subject, we must now

⁴¹ I am much indebted to Cynthia Chase's essay, "Primary Narcissism and the Giving of Figure" in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva*, ed. John Fletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London: Routledge, 1990) which prompted much of the thinking in this chapter. In this fascinating essay Chase draws on Neil Hertz's essay on de Man, "Lurid Figures" in *Reading De Man Reading* ed. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989) to explore what Kristeva means by primary narcissism.

⁴² For this equation of the subject of primary narcissism with the novelist we have Kristeva's own authority. In "The Adolescent Novel" she applies her developed theory of the imaginary to the novel, understanding the novel as a re-activation of the imaginary stage within the symbolic, just as adolescence is such a reactivation. The adolescent, like the novelist, invents himself by appropriating other roles: "... adolescent writing (written sign + fantasy filtered through the available imaginary codes) reactivates the process of the appearance of the symbol . . . The novelistic genre itself . . . would be, from this point of view, the work of a perpetual subject-adolescent which, as a permanent testimony of our adolescence, would enable us to retrieve this immature state . . ." "The Adolescent Novel" in *Abjection, Melancholia and Love* 11

return at last to the paradoxical nature of language conceived as such, as a quasi-object available for appropriation, rather than as (but also at the same time) the constitutor of objects: for it is central to the claims of novels to realism, as to the claims of Foucault for discourse in general, that they *are* constitutive of objects. It begins to appear that this referential function of discourse is contingent on a performative function that it is obliged to deny.

For part of that performance is abjection. The subject of identification, the speaker of an appropriated discourse, can only come into being *edged* with the abject. The abject is the reminder that the subject is constituted by a discourse that is not his own, that neither he nor his objects exist except by its constitution. It is thus visible in the gaps between the novel's discourses, in their interaction and incongruity. The referential use of the appropriated discourse by the subject, its use to constitute objects, is edged with its performative function, its presence as a quasi-object itself, as constitutive of the subject, as Other. It is a "frontier" or a "border" to discourse.⁴³ As such, it can survive with the symbolic, as the semiotic could not without ceasing to be truly other to language.

. . . Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship . . . *I am only like someone else*: mimetic logic of the advent of the ego, objects and signs. But when I seek (myself), lose (myself), or experience *jouissance* -- then "I" is *heterogeneous*. . . Thus braided, woven, ambivalent, a heterogeneous flux marks out a territory that I can call my own because the Other, having dwelt in me as *alter ego* points it out to me through loathing.⁴⁴

⁴³ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 9

⁴⁴ Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 10

Compare this to Kristeva's description of the novelistic writer in "Word, Dialogue, and Novel":

He becomes an anonymity, an absence, a blank space, thus permitting the structure to exist as such. At the very origin of narration, at the very moment when the writer appears, we experience emptiness . . . [I]n a literary text . . . emptiness is quickly replaced by a "one" (a *he/she*, or a *proper name*) that is really twofold, since it is both subject and addressee. It is the addressee, the other, exteriority . . . who transforms the subject into an *author*. That is, who has the S [writing subject] pass through this zero-stage of negation, of exclusion, constituted by the author. In this coming-and-going movement between subject and other, between writer (W) and reader, the author is structured as a signifier and the text as a dialogue of two discourses.⁴⁵

The replacement of intersubjectivity with intertextuality, with a heterogeneous flux in which the subject disappears, is described here as a consequence of the novel's lack of a reader, of an intersubjective other: but we can now see, in the light of Kristeva's later theory, that it might as a result return the subject to that state before subjectivity was constituted by the other; to the state, in fact, where it was constituted by the Other, by discourse as such.

What the quote from *Powers of Horror* most notably adds to the earlier essay is "loathing," horror itself. The theory of abjection allows us to move on from a Bakhtinian understanding of discursive juxtaposition as ironic. Bakhtin's approach holds good so long as all the discourses used in a novel share a cognitive status, are taken as referring to a common underlying reality: but discourses used thus are not included as whole languages, as Others, in the way we have been describing. A language conceived as such, as a whole, as a quasi-object, is a

⁴⁵ Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue and Novel," *Desire in Language* 74-75.

language conceived as prior to the objects it signifies, and constitutive of them. To speak this language, to use it to signify, under such conditions, is to acknowledge the priority of your action in doing so in relation to the signified, and in relation to yourself as speaking subject. To include a discourse in the text on such terms is not simply to juxtapose one cognitive discourse with another, to substitute (as "Word, Dialogue and Novel" suggests) a discourse for an other, but to include within the text the non-cognitive conditions of the text itself. Horror and abjection are the names we can now give this (p)recognition, this acknowledgement of what comes before cognition, before signification. And horror, abjection, can be a driving force behind the plot. A discourse thus included in a text does not only tell the story: it becomes a part of the story, part of what is told. Kristeva's theory opens the way for a psychoanalytic criticism of the novel which takes as its material the tales that novels tell about their own interdiscursive relations.

Conclusion: Grave Books Read Backward

We are now in a position to re-describe the appropriation and suppression of feminine fictional discourse by Scott's first novels in psychoanalytic terms.

Let me approach such a re-description negatively. I am *not* arguing that the domestic novel itself is somehow outside of or subversive of the symbolic order, of the law of the father. On the

contrary, as we have seen in the case of Burney, it was often an attempt to secure an accepted place within the existing order, although it may have succeeded in altering that place at the same time. Scott moves a more generally defined feminine fictional discourse to the edge of the law within *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, but only because he is redefining the law in his own, cognitive-realist terms.

Nor am I arguing that the discourse of the domestic novel belongs with the semiotic, with the body, either in its own right or as it is used in Scott's texts. It does not somehow bring the enunciative presence of writer or reader into an otherwise disembodied discourse. Enunciative presence of the material type as described by Kristeva in her early work is, I have argued, absent from the novel as *novel*. Domestic discourse is indeed used within these novels to bring in a different enunciative position, but that position is of the subject of intersubjective dialogue, of posited reader expectation. The novels themselves, by their interdiscursivity, construct a place of enunciation entirely in terms of literary history. The speaking subject of *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and *The Black Dwarf* is constituted by his relation to previous fiction, or more exactly, to a specific type of fictional language conceived in its entirety. It is constructed from an Other, not in dialogue with an other.

I should not be taken as implying, however, that women writers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had no anxieties of their own about their position as authors, or their readers' expectations. We have seen how Frances Burney's fiction

is constructed around such anxieties. Nor do I want to suggest that the domestic novel was somehow a purely performative intersubjective chain of discourse, improving the morality of its young female readers without claiming to describe the world outside as it did so. All I am claiming is that as Scott appropriates this discourse he defines it by its performative qualities, and not by its cognitive ones.

Scott's appropriation of feminine discourse as a whole language, as a quasi-object, plays the same role in the establishment of his cognitive order of discourse, as an infant's identification with the speech of the father does in the establishment of its subjectivity. Its explicitly performative function is not included in the text simply as the opposite of the dominant cognitive discourse, but as its precondition. Just as the child's eventual ability, on entry to the symbolic order, to refer to an external reality is founded in an earlier invention of its self in relation to the language of the father, so the existence of the historical novel and all its realistic claims are founded in the author's invention of himself as an author of fiction, and this he does in relation to an explicitly fictional discourse, that of the women novelists. Feminine discourse is not only what Scott's discourse is not, it is what Scott's discourse must also be despite itself: namely, fiction, a performance.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ The gender difference between the language of the father and feminine fictional discourse is no objection to the equation in their functions that I am making here. I have continued to refer to the language with which the child identifies as the language of the father, since this is how it appears in Kristeva's writing: in fact, to name it thus is really to project back the function of the father at a much later stage, as mediator of the child's entry into the symbolic. In primary narcissism, the child is not yet capable of distinguishing parents by gender, and so to

It is thus that Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory can explain the structuring of the plots of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* around mother-figures as abjects, whose exclusion from the text is necessary for the successful appropriation of the Other within the main discourse of the novel. We have seen Kristeva's theory of primary narcissism develop from Freud's observation that "the objects to which men give most preference, their *ideals*, proceed from the same perceptions and experiences as the objects which they most abhor". What is idealized in these novels, appropriated and imitated as a quasi-object, is the language of feminine fiction. However, this discourse is the same as the speech which is abhorred, which is repressed from the text: that of the silent or petrified mother, Sophia Mannering or Mrs. Vere, who are responsible for starting the plot, and thus a condition of the story's existence, of its existence as fiction. They are the abject mothers of these texts. The fact of their silence, of their repression, is acted out in the suppression of the speech of their daughters within the plot for which they are themselves responsible. That suppression itself, indeed, reveals the mother's action and the daughter's speech to be in the same relation to the dominant discourse of these novels.

Autonomous feminine fictionality as abject begins the plot of these novels, although that origin is necessarily excluded from their discourse. Feminine discourse as an appropriated whole, a

distinguish paternal from maternal functions here is strictly speaking anachronistic. Freud footnotes a reference to the child's "identification with the father in his own personal prehistory" with the comment, "Perhaps it would be safer to say 'with the parents'" as this happens "before a child has arrived at definite knowledge of the difference between the sexes" ("The Ego and the Id," *On Metapsychology* 370).

quasi-objectified language, drives the plot of these novels, although it does so by requiring the plot to engineer its exclusion. Finally, feminine discourse is reduced to an object proper, available to the novels' cognitive discourse, but with the unique status of an object that can act in non-objectifiable ways. A figure like Meg Merrilies functions as a boundary to the cognitive discourse of her novel: she is knowable as a character within that discourse's sociological terms, but only as a limiting case, for what she achieves is not explicable in those terms. She is placed as an object within the novel's dominant discourse, but her actions are entirely Other. She and Elshie act as figures within the text for the abject mothers, for the discursive marginalization of domestic fiction that is the repression of the latter made knowable within the story in the social marginalization of the former.

This study must restrict itself to Scott, and cannot explore the general usefulness of psychoanalytic theory in criticism of social-realist fiction. However, it is perhaps not too surprising that we should find poststructuralist critical theory particularly applicable to Scott, of all the realist novelists of the nineteenth century. For Kristeva, like Barthes, takes nineteenth-century conventions as bourgeois norms against which poststructuralism pits its alternative truth about subjectivity and language. It is in Scott that we find the first inscription of those norms. The way in which they were inscribed is precisely de-scribed by the theory that inverts them. Scott's replacement of the reader with the world is just that process which contemporary literary theory has put into reverse.

Such an explanation for the relevance of psychoanalytic theory might suggest, however, that the interdiscursive processes that we have been examining work themselves out in these first novels alone. It is at the start of his career as a novelist, after all, that establishing the difference of his fiction from that which has gone before is important for Scott; if the place of enunciation of these texts is literary history, understood as a set of interdiscursive relations, then that place in history is not fixed, but changed by the publication of the *Waverley Novels* themselves. The need for Scott to place his fiction in relation to other genres would quickly disappear. *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* would then appear as *adolescent* works: a renegotiation of the subject's place with regard to his language from a position already within language. Once this stage was passed, the Author of *Waverley* would enter into an "ideally postulated maturity":⁴⁷ the maturity of the masterpieces, of *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian*. These texts would be written for a readership with already formed expectations of this type of fiction, and Scott's discourse could become the sort of intersubjective dialogue in which Lacan located human psychic health.

In Part 2 I will examine two novels in which something like this seems to have happened, *Rob Roy* and *The Monastery*. These novels indeed retain an internal relation to feminine discourse, but it is included in these texts as an object, as a part of the story merely, and never as a discourse in its own right. One might

⁴⁷ "The Adolescent Novel" 10

imagine the beginnings of these novels as corresponding to the mid-points of *Guy Mannering* or *The Black Dwarf*, to the point in both in which feminine discourse has been suppressed from the text but remains as an agency within the story. Historical/cognitive discourse is unchallenged as the narrative mode of *Rob Roy* and *The Monastery*. They tend instead to *allegorize* the relation between the historical novel and the domestic novel which had earlier been worked out at the level of discourse.

However, reading them will help us understand *Saint Ronan's Well*, which similarly allegorizes inter-discursive relations in its story, but does so in a dominantly feminine discourse. In *Saint Ronan's Well*, feminine discourse returns to Scott's fiction long after one might have expected it to be overcome. Feminine discourse returned in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* even after it had been suppressed from the text; just so, it returns within Scott's *oeuvre* as a whole, despite its apparent dismissal in the first novels.

In other words, Scott's realist fiction (and by this I mean the Scottish novels) never grows out of its dialogue with feminine fiction: it continues to be shaped by this dialogue, continues to define itself in opposition to the domestic novel. "Maturity," in this sense, remains forever "ideally postulated" and no more, for the subject of the novel, and for the subject of *these* novels in particular. For Kristeva, the subject's position within the law, within the symbolic order, is always edged by their relation to the symbolic order as a whole, by the abject; for myself, the cognitive claims of Scott's fiction themselves involve a denial of

intersubjective dialogue; they themselves imply a certain relation to the reader which precludes the subordination of objective knowledge as means to the end of fulfilling an intersubjective contract. For this to happen would involve a serious alteration and diminution of those cognitive claims.

Part Two

Allegories of Realism

Chapter 5

Rob Roy and The Monastery

(i) *Rob Roy*: Frank and Diana, Frank and his father

After Lucy Ilderton is banished from Ellieslaw Castle in *The Black Dwarf*, Scott rigorously maintains the ban on young ladies holding communication with one another in such a way as might threaten the omniscience of his narrators. He does so by the same means as in *The Black Dwarf*: the physical isolation of his genteel heroines from others of their own kind in great houses. The fate of the damsels thus isolated is either to fade into the background and wait for marriage (Edith Bellenden in *Old Mortality*) or go mad (Lucy Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor*). There are two exceptions to this latter rule, however. One is Diana Vernon in *Rob Roy*, who although isolated in Osbaldistone Hall maintains an autonomy of sorts from the men around her. The other exception (taking them, for these purposes, as a single text) is the women of *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*. Both centre on communities of women of various classes, rather than single ladies, but these communities are similarly isolated from and by the forces of history in remote homes. These communities, the castle of Glendearg in *The Monastery* and Loch Leven Castle during Queen Mary's imprisonment there in *The Abbot*, include men, but those are either young noblemen, or old domestics:

they inhabit communities defined as feminine by the dominant discourse spoken within them rather than by any gender exclusivity.

Why should feminine discourse return as an issue in these particular novels? Because their claim to cognitive realism is an issue in these particular novels. In *Rob Roy*, the narrator of the novel's historical/cognitive discourse is no longer an omniscient third person narrator, but a character in his own story, which he is relating in a letter to a friend. In *The Monastery* and *The Abbot*, Scott works out the implications of his shift away from cognitive realism towards romance in *Ivanhoe* (rather as he worked out the implications of the realism of *Waverley* in two subsequent novels, *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*).¹ In the last novel that I will examine in this section, *St. Ronan's Well*, it is the use of domestic discourse itself as the dominant narrative mode that raises a problem with the novel's cognitive status.

Diana Vernon is indeed isolated from any like-minded female company of the sort that seemed to be necessary for feminine autonomy in the earlier novels: she has no Matilda Marchmont or Lucy Ilderton in dialogue with whom an alternative reality to that of the violent masculine world around her can be constructed. Instead, she engages in a dialogue with the novel's hero, Frank Osbaldistone, of a length and complexity unparalleled in the *Waverley* Novels.²

¹ *The Monastery* was in fact begun first and then laid aside in favour of *Ivanhoe*.

² No Scott hero and heroine fill so many pages with their private talk. For a similar length of intimacy one has to look to *The Pirate*, where Mordaunt

"I am in this happy family as much secluded from intelligent listeners as Sancho in the Sierra Morena, and when opportunity offers, I must speak or die." (I.vi.124)

Within this dialogue she exhibits all the wit and irony that one expects from the heroine of a domestic novel, and something which at first resembles the autonomy from male purposes that we have seen in Sophia Mannering and Isabella Vere before her. Frank and Diana are not, however, equal partners in this discourse. They do not cooperate together in the creation of their own world as the young women do. But the inequality between them is not that which one would expect. Where Frank might expect the conventional inter-gender discourse to put him, the gentleman, at an advantage as the initiator of conversation with a young lady, Diana gains the upper hand by returning his own speech to him, ironized by her very appropriation of it: "I will tell you what you think of me," she begins, and proceeds to recite back to him his thoughts about her (I.vi.123). Frank admits that he is obliged to receive her "communications" on her terms. When, later in the novel, Frank learns of an unknown rival, and reminds Diana that "a beautiful young woman can have but one male friend," she replies:

"You are, of course, jealous, in all the tenses and moods of that amicable passion. But, my good friend, you have all this time spoke

Mertoun spends years in the company of Minna and Brenda Troil. But on the one hand, neither woman can count as Mordaunt's lover, since he fails to choose between them; and on the other, this closeness is reported as background to the story, and little of their talk is given to us at the level of discourse. It is indeed Mordaunt's alienation from the sisters, and not his previous intimacy with them, that is the mainspring of the plot here. Something very similar could be said about *The Monastery*, as we shall see.

nothing but the paltry gossip which simpletons repeat from play-books and romances, till they give mere cant a real and powerful influence over their minds. Boys and girls prate themselves into love . . ." (II.iv.79)

Diana makes explicit the definitive role for interpersonal relationships of the discourse in which they are conducted. Earlier in their relationship they would normally be caught in a discourse based on compliment paid by the male and accepted by the female, but again, Diana understands the conventionality of this discourse and the disadvantage that it puts her at as a woman. She says so to Frank in a development of precisely this metaphor of *paying* compliment. She compares compliments paid to women to beads given to befriend savages, a transaction dependent on the ignorance of the savages of the worthlessness of what they are being given. Diana "know[s] their real value," and thereby makes impossible her inscription in conventional discourse and subjugation in its power-structure. She continues her commercial metaphor in mock sympathy: "I have cried down and ruined your whole stock of complimentary discourse by one unlucky observation" (I.vi.122).

The comparison of discourse and commerce here alerts us to the way in which Diana's discursive strategy repeats that of Frank's merchant father in his intercourse with his son at the beginning of the novel. The first two chapters of *Rob Roy* repeatedly present us with Frank's language being recited back to its writer from the voice of an other: his father's. Frank's father is characterized at once by his taciturnity ("he never wasted words in vain") but in fact he dominates the dialogue with his son. The bulk of their first conversation on the latter's return

from France consists of his reading back Frank's letter ("to the penning of which there had gone, I promise you, some trouble," I.i.12) not verbatim, indeed, but in the second person and with interjected complaints and corrections. He concludes:

"For, after all, Frank, it amounts but to this, that you will not do as I would have you."

"That I cannot, sir, in the present instance; not that I will not."

"Words avail very little with me, young man," said my father . . . "Can *not* may be a more civil phrase than *will not*, but the expressions are synonymous where there is no moral impossibility." (I.i.13-14)

Our first encounter with paternal authority in the novel reveals it as working within language, not as the origin of its own speech, but as the place from whence the speech of the son returns to him judged, altered, corrected. Its immediate effect is to deprive the son of the ability to speak at all ("I was unable to take that active share in the conversation which my father seemed to expect from me," I.i.15). This situation is repeated in chapter II, where his father reads aloud from Frank's commonplace book Frank's notes on the Bordeaux trade (and miscellaneous historical notes), again with his own corrections. Out of this book then falls some poetry of Frank's, and it too is read back to him with his father's comments, an alien discourse emerging from within pages that ought to have been devoted to commerce.

That Diana should be able to exert discursive power over Frank is perhaps a little surprising; that she should do so by the same means as his father demands explanation. The speech of both is indeed defined in opposition to the same structure of

unaltered reply, described in both cases in the commercial terms that we have already noted. This concern with the relation between language and trade also crops up at the end of chapter I, where the narrator comments,

My father never quarrelled with a phrase, however frequently repeated, provided it seemed to him distinct and expressive; and Addison himself could not have found expressions so satisfactory to him as, "Yours received, and duly honoured the bills inclosed, as per margin." (I.i.22)

Here, then, is a distinguishing feature of commercial discourse: its expressions can be repeated without any alteration of meaning that might reflect the place from which they are returned. In the interpersonal discourse between Frank and his father, on the contrary, speech is never repeated without being marked by the place of its repetition, and by the exercise of power which that utterance constitutes. Frank's father forgets that this is the rule rather than the exception on one occasion. "Knowing . . . very well what he desired me to be," he takes his French partner's assurance that his son is "all that a father could wish" as a perfect return of this desire from the other (I.i.22). He forgets, in other words, that Dubourg may have desires of his own, an interest in not disturbing their relationship with the truth. That most discourse does *not* follow the commercial model and *cannot* be returned without being marked by the site of its repetition is something Diana does not forget. This is precisely what is at stake in her rejection of Frank's compliments. To return the conventional replies to his conventional niceties would not be to simply trade like for like. The gentleman's compliment

is an investment of desire on which he expects a return, and to supply that return is to be implicated in his desire. Trade promises an exchange of exact equivalents, but ignorance, such as that of savages or of an unselfconscious woman, can put one of the parties concerned at an advantage. The speech which perfectly repeats the man's discourse, without any mark of the woman who repeats it, makes her the passive echoer of his desire.

Diana is knowing where she should be ignorant about the way that complimentary discourse works, and the effect of this subversive knowledge is initially to silence Frank, just as Frank was reduced to silence by his father's authority. She offers him a way out of this discourse, however, and that is to refuse the gender roles that this discourse embodies: "Endeavour to forget my unlucky sex," she tells him (I.vi.122). They *both* know the meaninglessness of conventional male-female discourse, and so equality within some other discourse *not* governed by the gender difference is an option. Diana has been given the sort of education normally reserved for boys by their mutual cousin Rashleigh and indeed in emulation of him:

"I wanted, like my rational cousin, to read Greek and Latin within doors, and make my complete approach to the tree of knowledge, which you men-scholars would engross to yourselves, in revenge, I suppose, for our common mother's share in the great original transgression."
(I.x.229)³

³ Compare Diana's transvestite enthusiasm for the classics with Sophia Mannering's mockery of them in comparison to the modern European languages more properly part of a young lady's education.

The learning that they have in common might provide a discourse which was based on mutual knowledge rather than desire. Frank and Diana's meeting place is the dilapidated library of Osbaldistone Hall, the place of her education and, because of Diana's learning, the place where "man and woman might meet as on neutral ground." However, we later learn that the library is also the scene of her attempted seduction by Rashleigh. It is thus at once the site of a knowledge which Diana hopes could transcend sexual difference, and the place of an attempted sexual transgression which gives the lie to that hope. The motivation behind Diana's education by Rashleigh was itself based on sexual desire, and for Frank the knowledge with which it has furnished Diana remains stained by this original purpose, tending

. . . to break down and confound in her mind the difference and distinction between the sexes . . . It is true she was sequestered from all female company, and could not learn the usual rules of decorum, either from example or precept. Yet such was her innate modesty, and accurate sense of what was right and wrong, that she would not of herself have adopted the bold uncompromising manner which struck me with so much surprise on our first acquaintance, had she not been led to conceive, that a contempt of ceremony indicated at once superiority of understanding, and the confidence of conscious innocence. (I.xiii.318-9)

We can thus see one of the things which makes equality within intersubjective discourse impossible for Frank and Diana: Frank's desire for Diana makes the gender difference impossible to overlook. Despite Diana's exhortation that Frank should forget *her* sex, they can only really enjoy a common discourse if Frank forgets *his*: if he fills the role of the female confidante that Diana lacks. The knowledge that they share and which could have formed the basis for such an equality is itself already sexualized.

It cannot be an inter-gender equivalent of the fiction which provides the common ground for Sophia and Matilda, for Isabella and Lucy, and Frank cannot take the place of the female correspondent and confidante that provides these heroines with their autonomy.

Indeed, it is not knowledge that they share that ends up providing Frank and Diana with a common discourse, but knowledge that they do *not* share. There is indeed a cognitive imbalance between them, but it is not the ignorance on Diana's part of the conventionality of compliment that Frank expects. It is instead that Diana knows things that Frank does not about her position at Osbaldistone Hall itself, what Frank repeatedly refers to as her "mystery." It is around this mystery, this central ignorance on Frank's part, that they must construct their discourse. Diana concludes the conversation in which she lists her three complaints in chapter ix with the words, "I must settle signals of correspondence with you, because you are to be my confidant and my counsellor, only you are to know nothing whatever of my affairs" (I.ix.223). These "signals of correspondence" are to inform Frank of when Diana can *not* tell him something. Now Diana has from the first been characterized by her position in a complex of freedoms and confinements, from the description of her hair, which has been tied in a ribbon but has since escaped (I.v.95), to her understanding Frank's compliments, and saying so, but saying so by saying that she ought not to understand them (I.v.102,103). The third and most serious complaint that she makes in chapter ix, after bemoaning

the disabilities she incurs by her gender and her religion, is that she is "by nature . . . of a frank and unreserved disposition" who is obliged by her situation to dissemble (I.ix.219). Here she suggests a way in which they can talk despite her need for secrecy. Their discourse, for which these "signals of correspondence" stand as a metonym, is henceforth to consist primarily of the constant renegotiation of the terms on which that discourse is to be carried on, without any particular content, or at least the content of Diana's "mystery," being communicated thereby; or we could rather say, that the way in which their relationship is defined and revised by those varying terms *is* the content of their discourse. It is only thus that Diana can share a speech with Frank that is neither the purely negative irony of her initial second-person retorts to Frank's compliments, nor built around her submission to Frank's desire.

(ii) *Rob Roy*: Diana and her father

This mystery, this "blank,"⁴ this unknown third term which governs the relationship of Frank and Diana, is nominally revealed as her father, a Jacobite who has been using

⁴ The word offers itself from Frank's own narrative. Diana falters in describing her relation to the ghostly stranger of the Hall, and Frank "filled up the blank in my own way. 'Whom she loves, Miss Vernon would say.'" (II.iv.75). It is perhaps the only instance of Frank turning the discursive tables and returning Diana's speech back to her. More interestingly, it reminds one of Diana's marriage contract as described to Frank by Rashleigh: "A dispensation has been obtained from Rome to Diana Vernon to marry *Blank* Osbaldistone, Esq., . . ." (I.xi.270). Frank, "Frank," will indeed fill in this blank in his own way, taking the place of her father as her husband.

Osbaldistone Hall as a hide-out; it is thus at the same time revealed as the world of political action to which she is committed by her relationship to him. He is the "third party unknown and concealed" of whom Frank is jealous (II.iv.79). It is once he steps forward with his daughter at his side that she says to Frank, "You now understand my mystery" (III.xi.312). It is almost all she does say: in his presence she is reduced to the same silence as Frank was in the opening chapters by *his* father, and as Sophia Mannering and Isabella Vere are by theirs. The difference is that this silence is not the result of developments in the plot, but rather an aspect of the relationship between Diana and her father from the beginning. This was noted by Frank even before he knew who the third party was: "Their league, if any subsisted between them, was of a tacit and understood nature, operating on their actions without any necessity of speech" (II.ii.43).

I have suggested, in the case of *Guy Mannering*, that the omniscient narrator's claim to be describing a world external to his discourse, which is *knowable* in historical and sociological terms, is associated with Mannering himself and his milieu. I further suggested that feminine discourse was unassimilable to these cognitive ambitions as it aspired to create an alternative reality in language rather than describe an independently existing one. It was unknowable, impossible to reduce to sociological or historical fact as folk characters like Meg Merrilies were. In *Rob Roy*, Diana's speech with Frank, a speech which comes to revolve around something which cannot be said, seems

at first to reverse the relation of feminine discourse to the omniscient narrator of those earlier novels. Frank shares the cognitive commitments of Scott's other narrators, as a narrator himself (we are perhaps to imagine these reminiscences of his youth informed by the social thought of the Enlightenment that has flourished in the intervening years)⁵ but also as protagonist: "I was born a citizen of the world, and my inclination led me into all scenes where my knowledge of mankind could be enlarged" (I.iv.70) is how Frank explains his younger self's condescending to join his fellow guests for Sunday dinner at their inn. Diana Vernon escapes the cognitive capture of Frank-as-protagonist for most of the novel. Instead, he is obliged to relate to her in a discourse empty of cognitive content, whose subject matter is just the terms on which that discourse is conducted, by her "mystery." Instead of feminine discourse being made impossible by the novel's cognitive claims, as in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, Frank's masculine discourse is made impossible by Diana's.

One might then expect this "mystery" to prove external to the historical and sociological reality that Frank as narrator constructs. But it is not. It is revealed as precisely that sort of reality: her involvement in political and military conspiracy. That which empties Frank and Diana's speech of any cognitive content turns out to be itself part of the novel's cognitive content.

⁵ See, for example, his rather surprising pause to discuss the savage naturalness of Celtic art in the middle of narrating his Highland adventure: "The taste, as well as the eloquence of tribes, in a savage, or, to speak more properly, in a rude state, is usually just, because it is unfettered by system and affectation . . ." (III.viii.239)

In *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, the heroine constructs an identity in her dialogue with her friend autonomous from the social-historical reality of her father and his allies. This autonomy is then made impossible by the world of the father in a series of proairetic plot developments. Similarly, in *Rob Roy*, Diana constructs an identity for herself in her dialogue with Frank, which is itself autonomous from the world of politics and violence around them at Osbaldistone Hall. And similarly this too is lost, closing off the extra-historical space that was maintained in their discourse by Frank and Diana, much as the extra-historical feminine discourses of the earlier novels were. Thus Scott guarantees the inclusive scope of that which his text constructs as socio-historical reality. However, in *Rob Roy*, the historical reality that Diana's discourse denies is prior to that discourse and makes it possible. Diana's discourse is not made subordinate to historical reality by events in the story: it is *always* subordinate to historical reality. Frank and Diana's original discursive autonomy depends on the deliberate exclusion from their discourse of her already-existing political involvement with her father.⁶ The suppression of feminine discourse by historical discourse structures the text not through the actions of the characters, but through the delayed revelation of a truth about them; not in the proairetic code, but in the hermeneutic code.

⁶ This denial of an historical reality indeed structures their discourse rather as their reading in fiction structures the young ladies' dialogues in the earlier novels: it is itself an autonomy-generating fiction.

Thus there is no need here for intervention by a folk-culture figure such as Meg or Elshie to bring the novel to a close. Closure comes, not indeed in social-historical terms, but by the revelation of the universal scope of those terms. Through the revelation about Diana's political involvement, it is the hermeneutic code itself, the movement of the signifier, and not any historical signified, that is providing closure. The revelation of her political role is an *allegory* of the the totalizing claims of cognitive discourse, although not itself an object such as that discourse constructs.

Yet Frank and Diana are connected by the action of the novel as well as by each other's speech, by a plot which provides another sort of closure, proairetic closure. The plot revolves around letters of credit stolen from Frank's father by Rashleigh to help finance the rebellion; yet despite this political motivation for their theft, the path of the letters is quite separate from the novel's descriptions of Highland life and British political history. Frank Osbaldistone goes to the Highlands in the hope of persuading Rob Roy MacGregor to help return the letters. In doing so he provides a point of view from which the new commercial self-confidence of Glasgow can be described, the squalor of Highland life deplored, and the thrills and horrors of a skirmish between the MacGregors and the army enjoyed. But all of this is quite incidental to the resolution of the plot: the letters are returned by entirely different means. Edward Waverley's privileged position as the reader's point of view on the 1745 rising and the Highland society from which it largely sprang, and

his personal implication in that rising, are mutually dependent. In *Waverley*, as we have seen, the extra-historical plot functions to keep Waverley in that position. In *Rob Roy*, Frank is in no way personally implicated in the rebellion itself. The sort of knowledge that we are given about early eighteenth-century Scottish society is the sort of historical or sociological knowledge to which the omniscient narrators of the earlier novels are committed and which makes an extra-cognitive source of plot-closure necessary. However, historical or sociological description prove as useless at providing plot closure here as they did in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*.

Indeed, if the plot is understood as the matter of the letters of credit and the revelation of Diana's political involvements, then the Scottish journey, which takes up over half the book, and provides it with the hero of its title, are a distraction from the plot. They sit between us and the important action, the recovery of the letters by Diana and her father, rather as Thorncliff sits between Frank and Diana on the one hand and Rashleigh on the other at the dinner table, so that their conversation could be kept from his ears (I.vi.118). They are a distraction, as the skirmish that Frank witnesses in the Trossachs is a distraction from the preparations being made for civil war.⁷

⁷ Indeed, major historical events always reach the protagonist at second hand in this novel. Even fictional ones: the political repercussions of his adventure with Morris reach Frank through a Scots peddler, much as the first explicit declaration of Jacobite rebellion is made to Edward Waverley by a Scots blacksmith's wife. Frank does (presumably) witness some historical events at first hand, since he joins the Hanoverian army when the rebellion actually breaks. But these are simply mentioned rather than narrated, and that as briefly as possible. His service gets precisely two sentences, informing us that he joined up, and that he was later demobbed (III.x.275,279).

The second and third volumes of *Rob Roy* seem in fact to consist of a social-historical discourse, which provides it with its cognitive content; a hermeneutic structuring of the text, with its final revelation of Diana's political agency, which at once provides closure and functions as an allegory of historical knowledge; and the letters plot, which does not seem to have much purpose other than to provide a pretext for the former and eventually to deepen Diana's mystery still further. I want to argue now that the letters plot is important to our understanding of Frank's position as a narrator, and thus provides a common context for the novel's cognitive content and the role of Diana.

(iii) *Rob Roy*: Frank as narrator

We should begin here by acknowledging that Frank is not entirely above suspicion in the politics of the '15, although his implication is totally inadvertent in a way that even Waverley's is not. He is suspected, when he first arrives in Northumberland, of robbing a government courier of gold destined for the government army in the North. Frank, falling in with Morris, the courier, on his journey, is totally ignorant of the contents of his companion's saddle-bags, yet Morris is so terrified of robbery that these unmentioned contents govern their conversation entirely.

Neither was I offended. On the contrary, I found amusement in alternately exciting, and lulling to sleep, the suspicions of my timorous companion . . . (I.iii.65)

Frank simply acts as a mirror to Morris's fears without really knowing what they are. He is drawn into playing the role of potential highwayman, and Morris the role of victim, without the gold itself ever being mentioned between them. The gold functions as a signifier which determines their speech without ever entering it as such.⁸

It thus functions in a very similar way to the letters of credit whose theft and return constitute the plot of this novel. It is because of them that the characters are drawn into their various relationships in the second half of the novel. Also, it is to their return to Frank's hands that we look for a sense of closure to the plot. And it is by Diana's unnarrated action that they are finally so returned. As in *Waverley*, the narrative discourse elides that female intervention which is in fact instrumental in the plot. When they are returned to Frank, at the point where he must say farewell to Diana forever (not for the first time, or the last), the transaction is marked by a simile of execution.

. . . I could neither return Miss Vernon's half embrace, nor even answer her farewell. The word, though it rose to my tongue, seemed to choke in my throat like the fatal *guilty*, which the delinquent who makes it his plea knows must be followed by the doom of death. (III.vi.178)

Earlier, at Osbaldistone Hall, at the point of his greatest subjugation to Diana Vernon, when he must apologize for his boorishness of the night before, Frank follows her to the library

⁸ In this respect it assumes a governing role in their discourse similar to that of the purloined letter in Poe's story of that name as interpreted by Jacques Lacan, referred to at ch.4 above, p.200.

"like a criminal, I was going to say, to execution; but, as I bethink me, I have used the simile once, if not twice before" (I.xii.292). I can only find one previous occurrence (I.xii.282); but however many similar walks to the gallows Frank the narrator may have subjected his protagonist to at this point, the expression cannot help bringing to mind the two real "executions" performed in the course of the story. Morris is flung into Loch Ard with a rock tied round his neck by Helen MacGregor; Rashleigh is dispatched by Rob Roy himself. Both victims are carriers of wealth, and are defined by the wealth they carry in their relations with others.

I have distinguished here between Frank as narrator and Frank as protagonist. The older Frank's story is addressed to an intimate friend and business associate, Will Tresham, and this intimacy between writer and reader raises two difficulties in the former's eyes which he discusses at the outset of his narrative. First, there is the problem that the reader already knows much of what is to be related in the narrative. Frank in fact tacitly admits that he is torn two ways, between telling everything and telling just what his reader may not know. As a result, we, the real readers, cannot be sure just how much of what follows is meant to be already known to Will Tresham. The acknowledgement of Will's request that Frank commit to paper "narratives to which you have listened with interest," (I.i.5) and Frank's agreement with

what you have often affirmed, that the incidents which befel me among a people singularly primitive in their government and manners, have something interesting and attractive for those who love to hear an old man's stories of a past age (I.i.4)

imply that Will has already heard all of what follows. However, Frank concludes this introduction by promising to "endeavour to tell you nothing that is familiar to you already" (I.i.9). He seems unlikely to keep this promise given the other problem that their intimacy brings about. This is a written text, a different sort of thing from the oral discourse which is the normal mode of communication between the friends. "The tale told by one friend, and listened to by another, loses half its charms when committed to paper" (I.i.4). As a result, the writer *can* narrate much that his reader already knows, precisely because he is doing so in the form of a written text. The written word seems to involve an inequality between writer and reader as the spoken word does not between speaker and hearer: "I have you in my power" he boasts (I.i.6), a sentiment also expressed, as we have seen, by the omniscient narrator of *Waverley* (II.i.3-4; xxxiv.115: see p.39 above). At the same time, the writer *wants* to narrate much that his reader already knows precisely because it is a first person narrative. Writing about yourself is "seductive," says Frank the elder (I.i.6); and indeed he refers frequently in his text to the vanity of his younger self as related to his aspirations as a poet.

The job of the Sully anecdote within this discussion of the conditions of Frank's narration is very revealing. It is as if the aspects of first person narration which it seems intended to clarify are best explained in terms of something else: neither first-, nor third-, but *second* -person narration; Sully has his own story read back to him by his inferiors. How does Sully's

narration throw light on the two problems identified by the older Frank at the beginning of his own? On the one hand, it is clearly an extreme case of Will Tresham's epistemic position as reader: here, Sully cannot help but know *everything* that is related to him, since it all concerns his own life. They are perhaps such close friends that Frank has a sense of reading his story back to another self. On the other hand, it tends to undermine the distinction made between oral and written recollection. Sully's story is both written *and* spoken.

The most striking relevance of the Sully anecdote, and the reason that I think that it is more than a quaint joke between antiquarians, is not however to the problems raised in the introductory paragraphs by Frank the narrator, but to the problems faced in the course of the story by Frank the protagonist. The narrator in fact sticks very closely to the point of view of his younger self, only rarely supplying or implying information that he could only have acquired at a later stage. The distinction between them rather consists in their contrasting relationships to the discourses in which they find themselves. The second person mode of narration is precisely the one in which both Diana and his father address Frank, as we have already seen. They both repeat his own speech back to him. However, Sully's wealth and social position allowed him to dictate, if not actually write, that which was read to him. He received from others an unaltered repetition of his own good opinion of himself. This is exactly the opposite of what Frank endures from Diana and his father. The power relation embodied in their discourse is

in Frank the protagonist's case exactly reversed. It might seem then that the Sully anecdote is included by Frank as narrator to explain the power that he claims over Will as just the same as that exercised over his younger self by Diana and his father. In his repetition to Will Tresham of a story that Will already knows, Frank as narrator would thus be implicated in the same discursive power structures that frustrate Frank the protagonist in the course of his story.

On closer examination this equation between Frank's position now and Sully, Osbaldistone senior and Diana does not hold up. The latter three all enjoy their power to dictate how their words are repeated or to repeat and alter the words of others to some extra-discursive source of power: political, paternal, and in Diana's case the combination of Frank's love for her and his ignorance of her real situation. Frank and Will are in contrast old friends; further, Will is not hearing words of his own repeated back to him altered and judged, but merely words of Frank's that he has (probably) heard many times before. Frank the narrator, by giving us the Sully anecdote, has not accounted for the power he claims over his reader.

Frank the narrator's power comes not from his ability to dictate Will's reply, but from his assurance, despite the nominally epistolary nature of his narration, that Will will never be able to reply at all:

Throw, then, these sheets into some secret drawer of your *escritoire* till we are separated from each other's society by an event which may happen at any moment, and which must happen within the course of a few, -- a very few years. (I.i.5)

It is this anticipation of death that allows Frank to avoid the discursive power-games in which he was trapped in his youth and instead enjoy another sort of power that comes from his authorship of a text to which there can be no reply. Or rather, since Will's judgement of that text will be a sort of reply, one for which Frank will not be answerable. Frank will never have to hear an other reading this text back to him with interpolations and criticisms. The anticipation of death generates an irresponsible text.

This refusal by Frank to build into his narrative the possibility of a reply is I believe connected to Scott's attempt to compensate for his lack of a clear reader with the cognitive (historical, sociological) claims he makes for his work. On the one hand, it is obvious that Scott's project is nothing like Frank's: his reader is unknown, anonymous, and the intended appeal of its historical content is precisely that it tells us something that we didn't know. But on the other hand, we, like Will, have no opportunity to reply; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say, that Scott has no way to reply to *our* replies, to our interpretations of his text. Neither Frank's letter to his friend, nor Scott's novel, exist as contributions to a dialogue. Both attempt to preclude wayward interpretation, Scott by appeal to the shared external reality of history or society, Frank by appeal to shared knowledge of his story. Paradoxically, the cognitive claims of Scott's realist text function to exactly the same end as the cognitive uselessness of Frank's storytelling: to make

dialogue unnecessary. Frank the narrator has found a discourse in which to tell his story that is free from the vicissitudes of intersubjectivity. He has thus taken a place very similar to that of Scott's other, omniscient, third-person narrators.

The return of the commercial papers that Diana rescues from the Jacobites works at once as an allegory of the Hanoverian-generated commercial prosperity preserved by the rebellion's collapse, and at the same time represents the perfect return of meaning to its speaker, for which indeed commercial discourse is as we have seen a paradigm in *Rob Roy*. After weeks of having his speech toyed with by Diana, Frank finally gets a straight answer, as it were. But Frank wants this to be the beginning of a dialogue, not the end, and this proves impossible: both because Diana rides out of the darkness, entirely unlooked for, and, their meeting cut short by her father, rides off again into the night; and because when he wants to speak to Diana, to say farewell merely, he knows that her reply even to this would be like "the doom of death" (III.vi.178). The price that both Morris and Rashleigh pay for their possession of commercial wealth is summary execution. Frank gets off with a simile of execution.

That somewhere from which Diana comes is of course ultimately revealed as her political commitment. But the marking of Frank's loss of Diana into the night of the 1715 rising with a simile of death -- *his* death -- emphasizes that which should be obvious anyway. Diana without her mystery is no use to Frank. Diana as she can be redefined by Frank the narrator at the end of his text, Diana explained in the social-realist terms of

that text, is not the Diana that Frank the protagonist needs to speak to. The assimilation of Diana into history excludes the possibility of dialogue, for dialogue is conducted between subjects, not between a subject and an object of knowledge. And since it is within dialogue that subjects constitute themselves, Frank's subjectivity is also under threat, both as protagonist, without the possibility of hearing Diana's reply, and as narrator, without the possibility of hearing Will's; hence the common rhetoric of death. Frank the narrator has found a discourse which frees him from the vicissitudes of intersubjectivity, but it is not a discourse in which one can *live*. Perhaps his narration depends as much upon the loss of dialogue with Diana, his wife, as upon the impossibility of dialogue with his friend; upon her death, as much as the imminence of his own.

Thus *Rob Roy* as a whole emerges as an *allegory* of the inevitable disappointment involved in the social-realist text. The unknowable is revealed to be knowable, a text is handed to us that promises to be as free of the inflections of desire as a banknote, but the price of this perfect knowability is death: the death of the subject, the death of desire. The limitations of the cognitive-historical point of view of the narrators of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* were tacitly acknowledged by their juxtaposition with feminine discourses and the functional trajectory within the plot of the users of those discourses. Here, those limitations are experienced directly by the hero/narrator himself. Free feminine dialogue such as that enjoyed by the young ladies of those novels may be absent here, but it shapes

the novel even by its absence. Feminine fiction remains the other in contrast to which Scott defines the nature of his cognitive claims for his own. We must now consider how, indeed *if*, that other is felt when the cognitive claims of Scott's fiction are *lessened*.

(iv) *The Monastery* as an allegory of history

The Monastery is set during the minority of Mary Stuart, the early years of the Protestant reformation in Scotland. It opens with the Battle of Pinkie in 1547, in which Simon Glendinning, a feuar of the Abbey of Kennaquhair, is killed. In the ensuing guerilla war against the occupying English forces, Walter Avenel, a neighbouring baron, also dies, and his widow Alice flees Avenel Castle with their five-year-old daughter Mary to escape imminent English retribution. Eventually they and two old servants, Martin and Tibb Tacket, make it across the moors to Glendearg and refuge with Simon's widow Elspeth. Avenel Castle is seized by Alice's brother-in-law Julian, and so in the Tower of Glendearg they stay, and Mary is brought up there with Elspeth Glendinning's two sons, Edward and Halbert.

One strand of the story concerns the rivalry between the brothers for Mary's affections as they grow up. The other follows the efforts of the monks of Kennaquhair to recover a book that Alice of Avenel brings with her to Glendearg and which they discover, after her death, to be an English translation of the Bible.

The novel ends with the Bible safe in Mary's hands, the death of Julian Avenel in battle, and her marriage to Halbert, with whom she takes possession of her ancestral home. Halbert has found his way into the Protestant cause, and Edward, guilt-ridden at his jealousy of his brother, joins the monastery.

From such a summary it might seem as if this was a fairly typical example of the Scotch Waverleys. Set at a time of civil conflict between an appealing but outdated loyalism (to the Catholic Church) and a rather unappealing but necessary modernity (Protestantism), the hero is at first equivocal but eventually plumps for the winning side and is rewarded with marriage to his sweetheart. What sets *The Monastery* apart from all Scott's other novels is the explicitly supernatural machinery that is used to bring all this about. The White Lady of Avenel is the guardian spirit of Mary's house. She twice intercepts the monk carrying the Avenel Bible down Glendearg to the abbey, and appears when Halbert calls her up at a remote spot near the head of the glen called Corrie-nan-Shian. She is instrumental in provoking a duel between Halbert and Sir Piercie Shafton, a ludicrous upstart English courtier who has been made the scapegoat for a failed Catholic plot against Elizabeth and who is billeted on out-of-the-way Glendearg by the Abbot. She also ensures that they both survive unharmed, though Halbert is convinced that he has killed Sir Piercie, and flees into the waiting arms of the Earl of Murray, leader of the Protestant faction at the court. It is indeed she who ensures that the refugees from

Avenel reach Glendearg in the first place: lost in the bogs, Mary exclaims, "Bonny ladie signs to us to come yon gate" (I.iii.125).

Shagram [the pony], abandoned to the discretion of his own free will, set off boldly in the direction the little girl had pointed. There was nothing wonderful in this, nor in its bringing them safe to the other side of the dangerous morass; for the instinct of these animals in traversing bogs is one of the most curious parts of their nature, and is a fact generally established. But it was remarkable, that the child more than once mentioned the beautiful lady and her signals, and that Shagram seemed to be in the secret, always moving in the same direction which she indicated. (I.iii.126)

Martin and Tibb exchange knowing words on this vision of Mary's: not only is the White Lady of Avenel known to them, but Mary was born on Hallowe'en and therefore especially liable to communication with spirits. This is Scott's typical way of handling the supernatural. The narrator withholds explicit credence from beliefs which are instead presented in their context as part of the folk-culture and thus an object of interest in their own right. Note here the inclusion of an observation on the instinct of horses in finding their way across bogs, "a fact generally established." Both horse and folk are equally objects of the narrator's enlightened but sympathetic curiosity. Their ability to provide a way of knowing folk-culture is, as we have seen, one of the governing cognitive claims made by Scott for such novels as *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. There, such beliefs are given a realistic framework which at once suspends judgement on their credibility and allows them an agency in real, human affairs purely as a result of the belief that they command among the folk.

In *The Monastery*, however, the White Lady is given the full credence of the omniscient narrator (with the exception of this initial episode). She is simply accepted as one of the characters acting within the world of the story independently of anyone's belief in her. How does she fit into the realistic historical setting of Scott's story, and what implications does her presence have on the cognitive claims that usually accompany that realism?

One answer suggests itself in Father Eustace's reading of the scene in Glendearg as he rides to investigate the disappearance of the Bible. We have already been given a description of this topography by the narrator in the terms of eighteenth-century aesthetics:

... the scene could neither be strictly termed sublime or beautiful, and scarcely even picturesque or striking . . . These are ideas, however, of a far later age; for at the time we treat of, the picturesque, the beautiful, the sublime, and all their intermediate shades, were ideas absolutely unknown to the inhabitants and occasional visitors of Glendearg.

They had, however, attached to the scene feelings fitting the time . . .

As our Glendearg did not abound in mortal visitants, superstition, that it might not be absolutely destitute of inhabitants, had peopled its recesses with beings belonging to another world. (I.ii.95-7)

The point is made again on the first occasion that Alice's Bible is removed from the glen: the Sacristan was "insensible to beauties which the age had not regarded as deserving of notice" (I.v.170). The Sacristan is instead glad to escape its confines unmolested by fairies, only to be assaulted by the White Lady as he fords the Tweed. Father Eustace, however, has an alternative way of finding meaning in the November landscape around him.

"There," he said, looking at the leaves which lay strewn around, "lie the hopes of early youth, first formed that they may soonest wither, and loveliest in spring to become most contemptible in winter . . . None lasts -- none endures, save the foliage of the hardy oak . . . A pale and decayed hue is all it possesses, but still it retains that symptom of vitality to the last. -- So be it with Father Eustace! The fairy hopes of my youth I have trodden under foot like those neglected rustlers . . . but my religious vows, the faithful profession which I have made in my maturer age, shall retain life while aught of Eustace lives. Dangerous it may be -- feeble it must be -- yet live it shall, the proud determination to serve the Church of which I am a member, and to combat the heresies by which she is assailed." Thus spoke, at least thus thought, a man zealous according to his imperfect knowledge, confounding the vital interests of Christianity with the extravagant and usurped claims of the Church of Rome, and defending his cause with ardour worthy of a better. (I.viii.217-8)

While Eustace's allegorical interpretation of the glen avoids any sense of the supernatural at work in it, and the narrator simultaneously annotates this interpretation with a reminder of the monk's position at a turning point in European history, this very replacement of the supernatural with the personal and the historical elides the fact that Eustace's personal and historical struggle for his church is in this story against a supernatural agent. He will arrive at Glendearg to find that the White Lady, having wrenched the Bible from the Sacristan on its last attempted removal, has already returned it to the children of the house. Eustace himself will suffer an identical spiritual theft on his return down the glen that very evening. And again the Bible will find its way back to the Tower of Glendearg by means of the White Lady of Avenel. The narrator's psychological comprehension of superstition in chapter II as "feelings" which the locals "attached to the scene," and which are understandable historically in terms of how they fit "the time" is not, as we have seen, his characteristic stance in this novel.

This seems to suggest that we should understand the role of the White Lady in a historical novel as Father Eustace understands the autumnal trees: that is to say, allegorically. All the White Lady's interventions in the first half of the novel are to the end of placing her mother's Bible in the hands of the orphaned Mary Avenel, something she finally achieves in III.v. Before she does so she reappropriates it from the Sacristan (I.v); appears to all three children in Corrie-nan-shian and leaves the book behind her there for them to find (reported by Elspeth to Father Philip (I.viii); takes it back from Father Eustace when he again confiscates it (I.ix); gives it to Halbert two or three years later when he, in a jealous rage at Edward's success in their learning and apparent correlative success with Mary, calls her up and demands it from her (I.xii); and finally points out to Mary the place where Halbert has hidden it in the floor of the castle. Moreover, in its movement from hand to hand, it has the effect of altering the behaviour of those who come in contact with it, even though they are unaware of the cause. Edward is reluctant to give up what he regards as Mary's book to Father Eustace "with a positiveness which had hitherto made no part of his character" (I.ix.251). Halbert, after his first private encounter with the spirit, returns to the Tower where

. . . There was a general feeling that his countenance had an expression of intelligence, and his person an air of dignity, which they had never before observed . . . it was evident to all, that, from this day, young Halbert was an altered man . . . (II.ii.55-6)

The effect of the Bible as deployed by the White Lady seems to be an allegory of the ennobling effect of the Reformation, ennobling both in the new dignity that it grants those touched by it, and in the more literal sense that it raises the social consequence of low-bred but strong-willed figures like Halbert.⁹ As an allegorical representation of a socio-historical reality this apparently incongruous supernatural character could then be seen as working within the historical novel's claim to describe such a reality. It suggests a limit to the capacity of social realism to deal with historical change where that change is ultimately, as here, driven by the will of heaven rather than social forces; but the apparent ease with which the White Lady can be incorporated into the framework of that realism suggests that she is indeed working in the service of historical realism rather than subverting it. Scott does not claim that she can be an object of knowledge in the same way as Meg Merrilies (or, more to the point, the very corporeal *deus ex machina* of this novel's sequel, *The Abbot*, Magdalene Graeme); but her effects are an object of historical knowledge, and she herself is no more than a cypher for the unknowable movements of the soul that produce them.

Seen in the light of our thesis so far, however, the function of the White Lady is obviously more complicated than this. We

⁹ The democratizing effect of the Reformation and the ensuing upheavals is one of the sub-themes of *The Monastery*. This is at least part of the point of the Piercie Shafton episode, Sir Piercie having taken the alternative (perhaps we are supposed to imagine the *Catholic* alternative) route to upward mobility of maintaining a glittering facade of gentility to hide his lowly origins. Murray reassures Halbert, "In our days, each man is the son of his own deeds. The glorious light of reformation hath shone alike on prince and peasant" (III.x.264).

first hear of Alice of Avenel's book in the milieu of the Tower of Glendearg before her death. She

... read small detached passages from a thick clasped volume, which she preserved with the greatest care. The art of reading, the lady had acquired by her residence in a nunnery during her youth, but she seldom, of late years, put it to any other use than perusing this little volume, which formed her whole library. The family listened to the portions which she selected, as to some good thing which there was a merit in hearing with respect, whether it was fully understood or no. To her daughter, Alice of Avenel had determined to impart their mystery more fully, but the knowledge was at that period attended with personal danger, and was not rashly to be trusted to a child. (Liv.138)

The words of the Bible are spoken to an audience of mostly uncomprehending women. Left to their own devices, Tibb Tacket and Elspeth Glendinning carry on a conversation which centres on the supernatural (as befits Scots-speakers) and their relative status with regard to each other and to Alice: Tibb regards them both as on a par, since they are both Alice's servants, while Elspeth regards herself a step or two above Tibb as the householder. The book's ideal reader is Mary, but her possession of it must be postponed into the future. In this episode, on Hallowe'en, her birthday, she instead encounters the supernatural in the shape of her father's ghost. When it does eventually come into her hands, she is alone. Her mother and father both dead, Halbert too is at this point believed dead, and "It seemed as if all that connected her with earth, had vanished with this broken tie" (III.v.127). Alone, Mary reads her mother's interleavings, and alone, Mary learns to pray. And as if in answer to her prayers, one of Julian Avenel's soldiers arrives to announce that Halbert is

alive and well and at that moment on the run, in fact (as it happens) to join up with the Earl of Murray's forces.

This is almost the last we hear of the Avenel Bible. The next chapter introduces the clash between Eustace and the captured Protestant preacher, Henry Warden, who turn out to be old college friends. Their reunion is introduced thus:

In fact, that ancient system [Catholicism], which so well accommodated its doctrines to the wants and wishes of a barbarous age, had, since the art of printing, and the gradual diffusion of knowledge, lain floating many a rood like some huge Leviathan, into which ten thousand reforming fishers were darting their harpoons. (III.vi.147-8)

The narrator draws us back to the bigger historical picture and away from the supernatural goings-on. Our last glimpse of Mary's Bible comes as she wraps it up in her best muffler and worries about her lack of skill in interpreting it, while the narrator worries at how she might *misinterpret* it. "But Heaven had provided against both these hazards" (III.viii.196), by providing Warden to be kept prisoner in Glendearg with her, by Eustace's command, in ignorance of the Bible's presence there. "Were but Edward safe from the infection . . . I might trust this enthusiast with the women" are his initial thoughts on this plan of action (III.vi.169), and once Edward has decided to return with him to the abbey, he concludes, "I fear not his making impression on these poor women, the vassals of the Church, and bred up in due obedience to her behests" (III.viii.198). When Murray suggests the marriage of Mary and Halbert in the last chapter, Warden is able to assure him that

"they are both . . . by means which may be almost termed miraculous, rescued from the delusions of Rome, and brought within the pale of the true church. My residence at Glendearg hath made me well acquainted with these things." (III.xii.324-5)

The possession of the Bible might thus be seen as instrumental in integrating Mary into the historical context of the Scottish Reformation. The novel as a whole could then be understood as moving from the isolated feminine autonomy of the Tower of Glendearg in chapter IV (an isolation and autonomy that Eustace considers inviolable by the old man Warden) to an incorporation of that feminine autonomy in a piety that is at once private (Mary's solitude as she prays) but at the same time implicated in the public religious conflict going on around her. *The Monastery's* story would thus describe as an event in history the discursive incorporation enacted by *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. The aspect that sets *The Monastery* apart from the other two, namely the explicitly supernatural agency by which this incorporation is achieved, also seems to be explained by this variation within repetition of a familiar pattern. The agency by appeal to which Mary's story is successfully concluded is not the White Lady as such, but the Bible itself. Meg Merrilies and Elshie the Dwarf were able to perform this function as being at once quasi-supernatural agents and also, as folk-figures, objects of sociological knowledge. The Bible, as a text with an ongoing historical existence, can be fitted quite happily into a realistic schema of historical events. But understood as an agent, its action is all internal, and not amenable to narrative exposition (at least not in the sort of novel Scott is writing here). So the White

Lady becomes necessary as a pure, unknowable agency, an allegory of the spiritual necessity of this Protestant inwardness.

If the White Lady's action functions as historical allegory, however, it nevertheless does *not* integrate Mary within the framework of historical events. A number of factors conspire against the implication of Mary's personal discovery of the Bible in the historic reformation going on around her. Let us consider first the effect she actually has on Mary's life, before going on to consider her intended effect. Only by emphasizing the role of her Protestantism, hence of her Bible, and hence of the White Lady, in allowing her to marry Halbert, might the White Lady seem to pull Mary out of her isolation in Glendearg and into the public world of political conflict. But that her marriage to Halbert is conditional on her conversion is something we only hear from Warden himself, that is from someone within the historical framework of the novel. In fact Halbert and Mary's love predates their Protestantism. Indeed, Halbert is first driven to demand the book from the White Lady out of envy for the intimacy Edward has achieved with Mary in their shared lessons (I.x); and Mary's attachment to her Bible is considerably enhanced by the apparent efficacy of its prayers in returning Halbert from the dead (III.viii). The success of Protestantism seems conditional on the success of their romance, rather than vice versa.

The effect of the Bible in Mary's life is rather to isolate her from the historical events that are happening around her. The solitude, the quiet, of the scene where the White Lady indicates its place beneath the floorboards of the brother's room, contrasts

with the peril of Halbert's escape from Julian Avenel and the excitement of his meeting with Murray, Morton and the reforming army. As if to emphasize Mary's isolation with the book, she wakes on the morning of its discovery in a tower locked on the outside by the escaping Piercie Shafton, and first opens its pages to the sounds of the men of the Tower attempting ineffectually to batter down the door from within. And as military action fills the last five chapters of the novel, Mary effectively disappears, and is only referred to by other characters. This, when earlier the narrator had explained her preference for Halbert over Edward on the grounds that "the force and ardour of Halbert's character" bore "a singular correspondence to the energy of which her own was capable" (III.v.126). Mary has no opportunity to demonstrate this energy in the rest of the novel: her place seems to be to find the Bible, then stay within doors.¹⁰ Scott himself recognized in his 1830 introduction the way in which the ending of the novel simply

¹⁰ This is indeed where we find her at the beginning of *The Abbot*. There, the effect of Protestant loyalties has been at once to drive her husband Halbert away from home on Murray's never-ending manoeuvrings, and to isolate her from the surrounding ladies, predominantly Catholic and extremely conscious of Halbert's inferior birth. She has indeed still got Warden for company: "But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female . . . To superintend the tasks of her numerous female domestics, was the principal part of the Lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle . . . consumed the rest of the day" (*The Abbot*, I.i.9). Her adoption of Roland can be seen as her attempt to bring up a ("feminine") companion with whom to share this extra-historical space. But this hope is undone, as Roland is, in spite of his apparently lowly origins, already made profoundly historical by the agency of his grandmother, Magdalene Graeme, for whom he is a martyr for the Catholic cause.

effaces Mary's private story, the story within which the White Lady has a function, with political events.

. . . [T]he conclusion was brought about, not by incidents arising out of the story itself, but in consequence of public transactions, with which the narrative has little connexion, and which the reader had little opportunity to become acquainted with.¹¹

If the effects of the White Lady are meant to work within the novel as historical allegory, it is an allegory of the exclusion of educated women from the public world of political action, their isolation from precisely that which Scott's novels construct as history.

When we turn to the White Lady's intentions behind her actions we find confirmation that she is not even *trying* to draw Mary into history but rather to isolate her from it. The Bible is not the only signifier that the White Lady deploys in her manipulation of the mortal inhabitants of Glendearg. When Halbert calls her up on the second occasion, in order to ask her the cause of the sudden maturing he has undergone since the first, she links it to Mary, and warns of the rivalry that he faces there. He connects this with Sir Piercie, then making a great show of courtly manners to Mary as the only lady in the Tower worthy of such, and she gives him a silver bodkin to taunt him with (II.iii.142-3). This provokes the duel that I have already referred to, and Halbert's flight into the arms of Murray.

Scott rarely springs total surprises on his reader, the absence of any information usually being well-signalled at the

¹¹ Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang vol. XVIII, Introduction xxxvii.

point in the text where its absence is felt, so that the eventual filling of these gaps structures the text as a whole: this internal structuring being what Barthes calls the hermeneutic code. Here, however, the information that we wait to be told is why Sir Piercie should find a needle so offensive (his grandfather, it emerges, was a tailor). The White Lady's reason for provoking a fight and then ensuring that no one comes to any harm seems obvious in comparison: she wants Halbert to seek his fortune in the wide world so that he can find his place in the Protestant army, thus effecting in the masculine, public world the conversion she is effecting privately in Mary through the book. Thus Halbert becomes a fitting husband for Mary and capable of defending the fortunes of the restored house of Avenel within the new political order. This is, we discover in the final lines of the novel, the opposite of her intended effect:

"Vainly did my magic sleight
Send the lover from her sight;
Wither bush, and perish well,
Fall'n is lofty Avenell!"

(III.xii.349)

Her intention seems to have been an isolation of her client in the house with the book and not even as impinged upon by history as marriage to Halbert in fact leaves her. As often in the *Magnum Opus* introductions, Scott in 1830 identifies as a result of his own casual approach to his art what is in fact internal to the story.

(v) *The Monastery* as an allegory of discourse

It is at this point that the comparison with *Rob Roy* becomes revealing. Let us begin by summarizing the way in which that novel related to the pattern discovered in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. It resembled these earlier works in that its heroine employs a discourse different from that of the narrator, and in the way in which the text achieves closure in terms of her absorption into the history which is constructed as an object of the narrator's knowledge. It differed sharply from them, however, in that the heroine's alternative discourse was made possible only by a denial of her contemporaneous involvement in political action, and the text ends by simply revealing this fact, so that the closure by absorption in history in this novel is a matter of the hermeneutic structuring of the text rather than the discourse/plot interaction that we saw in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*.

Here, in *The Monastery*, we find the pattern of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* not just altered, but reversed. In the earlier novels a quasi-supernatural agency served to mediate the entry of some sort of feminine counter-action to the historical one from that autonomous discourse into the cognitive register of the omniscient narrator. I call it a quasi-supernatural agency because its supernatural claims for itself are not recognized by the narrator. Here, on the other hand, we have a supernatural agency confirmed as such by the narrator, but which works in the opposite direction: towards the isolation of feminine reading

from historical events rather than their integration. It achieves this by producing signifiers that, like the Osbaldistone letters of credit in *Rob Roy*, shape the relationships of those who come in contact with them without anyone necessarily knowing their meaning. Like those letters of credit, Mary's Bible can be seen as an allegory of historical events; but like those letters, its arrival at its ultimate destination points to the necessity of a discourse that is not a matter of historical events, that eludes the cognitive terms of Scott's text. What the comparison with *Rob Roy* suggests, is that both this use of an allegorical signifier and this reversal of the *Guy Mannering/Black Dwarf* pattern have to be understood in terms of the cognitive claims for his fiction that Scott explores within that pattern.

Indeed, when we return to *The Monastery* with this in mind, we find that one of the effects of the movement of that signifier seems to be an allegory, not of the limitations of those cognitive claims, but of a change in them. We first come across the Avenel Bible in the Hallowe'en scene in Glendearg quoted from above. Alice indeed reads aloud from it; however, like Mary's reading at the other end of its travels, this is in essence a private experience, for none of the other women present understand what they hear. Elspeth does not even recognize it as the Bible. Elspeth and Tibb share another discourse which takes up most of I.iv, after Alice goes to bed. Their conversation is in Scots, and centres on the exchange of supernatural anecdote, prompted by the appearance of Walter Avenel's ghost to Mary that evening. This apparition is, like the first appearance of the

White Lady on the moors, reported as something Mary has experienced, without the narrator admitting belief in ghosts himself. Instead, the Scots speakers are allowed to reveal their own belief in their conversation, superstition thus characteristically presented as an object of the narrator's (and reader's) knowledge. The Tower of Glendearg in this chapter contains representatives of both the extra-narratorial discourses that Scott includes in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*: the literate-ladylike, and the credulous-folk.

I mention the presence of Scots here, because the usual narratorial distance from folk-belief is not only disrupted here by narratorial acknowledgement of the supernatural, but also by the abolition, within the story, of the language of the more usual believers. When we first meet Martin, Tibb's husband, he speaks like this:

"Whisht wi' your pride, woman . . . eneugh ye can do, baith outside and inside, an ye set your mind to it; and hard it is if we twa canna work for three folk's meat, forbye my dainty wee leddy there." (I.iii.120)

In II.iii, as he accompanies Halbert on the hunting trip that will lead the latter to the White Lady for the second time (she has already given him the Bible), the following happens (it is worth quoting at length):

"Martin, see'st thou aught changed in me of late?"

"Surely," said Martin. "I have always known you hasty, wild, and inconsiderate, rude, and prompt to speak at the volley and without reflection; but now, methinks, your bearing, without losing its natural fire, has something in it of force and dignity which it had not before. It seems as if you had fallen asleep a carle, and awakened a gentleman."

"Thou canst judge, then, of noble bearing?" said Halbert.

"Surely," answered Martin, "in some sort I can; for I have travelled through court, and camp, and city, with my master Walter Avenel, although he could do nothing for me but give me room for two score of sheep on the hill -- and surely even now, while I speak with you, I feel sensible that my language is more refined than it is my wont to use, and that -- though I know not the reason -- the rude northern dialect, so familiar to my tongue, has given place to a more town-bred speech."

"And this change in thyself and me, thou can'st in no means account for?"

"Change!" replied Martin, "by Our Lady, it is not so much a change which I feel, as a recalling and renewing sentiments and expressions which I had some thirty years sine, ere Tibb and I set up our humble household. It is singular, that your society should have this sort of influence over me, Halbert, and that I should never have experienced it ere now." (II.iii.126-7)

Now, the change in the speech of the lower-class characters is not as clear cut as this contrast suggests: Scots returns in some mouths after II.iii, and indeed shows signs of gentrification before this point, but in general the change that Martin is here describing from dialect to this pseudo-medieval literary language, from Scots to Scott's, is indeed undergone by most of the characters in the novel. This new dialect is of course the language of *Ivanhoe* and most of the novels that followed. In the effect of the Bible on the characters in *The Monastery*, Scott is creating an allegory not only of the ennobling effect of the Reformation, but also, bizarrely, of a change in the discourse of his own fiction.¹²

That this change is generated within the story by that moving signifier whose destination is an isolated female reader suggests that the two are connected. The effect of the historical

¹² Needless to say, this discursive change escapes any interpretation as historical allegory. Taking their loss of Scots as a sign of the new dignity conferred on the peasantry by Protestantism seems a contradiction in terms, especially since the sign of peasant self-esteem in the Scotch novels is often the richness of a Scots infused with the vocabulary and cadences of the Authorized Version.

allegory is to place Mary in a private space, the private space of female reading that was her mother's, and thus beyond the field of political and social interaction constructed as an object of knowledge by Scott's text. But central to this cognitive claim on Scott's part was the folk, people like Elspeth and Tibb, whose speech and culture was paradigmatically knowable and whose inclusion in Scott's text underpinned its status as a cognitive apparatus. Scott's transformation of his lower-class characters from carriers of a folk-culture to courtly bit-part actors marks the abandonment of this cognitive claim. *The Monastery* expels Mary from history and politics as Julia and Isabella were expelled; but at the same time it abolishes history and politics as objects of knowledge. Rather than presenting a public world of shared history, in a field of knowledge that can be held in common by the text and its anonymous readership, the readership that *Waverley* calls its "public", that part of *The Monastery* that is not Mary's private reading becomes something else. It becomes what might more properly be called, as *Ivanhoe* and *The Monastery* are, a *romance*; for "the readers of romances are indifferent to accurate reference" (II.iv.fn). And the readers of romances are, as we already know, either female, or, like Edward Waverley, feminized. Mary's private reading is the Bible; but *The Monastery* turns itself into the sort of private feminine reading which is the common culture of Julia and Matilda, of Lucy and Isabella, and of Edward Waverley himself. Like *Ivanhoe*, it is that sort of reading; it does not discuss feminine reading through the comments of its heroines, or give such reading a role within

its plot as the misleader of its naive hero.¹³ It is directed at a particular class of readers, the "readers of romances" where the earlier novels, by their very cognitive claims, could dispense with any particularized reader whatever. Mary becomes not the heroine of another sort of fiction, like Julia or Isabella, but a type of the reader of *this* sort of fiction, the sort of fiction that *The Monastery* simultaneously becomes. *The Monastery* is an allegory of a change in the cognitive claims of the Waverley Novels which is also, inevitably, a change in their relation to feminine fiction.

Hence the self-mockery in which the narrator indulges when he does show off his historical knowledge, in this case of milling laws in the Abbey lands:

I could speak to the thirlage of *invecta et illata* too, but let that pass. I have said enough to intimate that I talk not without book. (II.i.5)

To use the term that describes the preaching technique of Calvinist clergymen in a novel about the Reformation, to appeal to the book in a novel in which the Book is a principal actor, and to do so in order to *limit* the amount of realistic historical detail that he feels obliged to include, shows that such detail has slipped

¹³ Laurence Templeton, the fictional editor of *Ivanhoe*, explains his necessary compromise between historical authenticity and readability by equating his work in this regard with just the sort of fiction that Sophia Mannering and Matilda Marchmont read in *Guy Mannering*. "It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, translated into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in. No fascination has ever been attached to oriental literature, equal to that produced by Mr Galland's first translation of the Arabian Tales; in which, retaining on the one hand the splendour of eastern costume, and on the other the wildness of eastern fiction, he mixed these with just so much ordinary feeling and expression, as rendered them interesting and intelligible . . ." (*Ivanhoe* I."Dedicatory Epistle".xvii)

from being the *raison d'être* of the text to being its background, something best got quickly out of the way, even an embarrassment. Hence also the cheerful acknowledgement by the Author of *Waverley* in his reply to Captain Clutterbuck's Introductory Epistle that this nominal supplier of the manuscript is one of his own inventions, a citizen of Utopia and no other country, and that the account of the manuscript's origins given by Clutterbuck is itself a fiction. This distancing of himself from the game of invented editors combines in the novel's concluding paragraph with the withdrawal of any claim to historical accuracy:

I have in vain endeavoured to ascertain the precise period of the story, as the dates cannot be exactly reconciled with those of the most accredited histories. But it is astonishing how careless the writers of Utopia are upon these important subjects. I observe that the learned Mr Laurence Templeton, in his late publication, entitled *IVANHOE*, has not only blessed the bed of Edward the Confessor with an offspring unknown to history, with sundry other solecisms of the same kind, but has inverted the order of nature, and feasted his swine with acorns in the midst of summer. All that can be alleged by the warmest admirer of this author amounts to this, -- that the circumstances objected to are just as true as the rest of the story; which appears to me (more especially in the matter of the acorns) to be a very imperfect defence, and that the author will do well to profit by Captain Absolute's advice to his servant, and never tell more lies than are indispensably necessary. (III.xii.350-1)

It should not then be surprising that *The Monastery's* sequel, *The Abbot*, repeats many aspects of *Rob Roy* without using them to discuss the nature of fictional realism. Catherine Seyton, with whom the hero, Roland Graeme, goes into the imprisoned Queen Mary's service, is very similar to Diana Vernon. She delights in teasing Roland; however, sometimes she will speak

. . . with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity of Catherine's manner, and plainly shewed, that beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling, than her conduct had hitherto expressed. (I.xii.259)

Like Diana, she is a figure of some mystery for the hero, committed to the political action around them in ways from which he, because his loyalties are uncertain to himself as much as anyone, is excluded. However, this commitment is not itself the mystery: it is obvious, given the presence with them in Loch Leven Castle of Mary Stuart herself. Rather, Catherine's mystery is how she manages to move, and change from masculine to feminine dress, as quickly as she seems to. And this is explained simply enough by the existence of a twin brother who sometimes pursues his secret service for Mary in female dress. The revelation that Diana's secret life is political says something about the nature of the realist text; the revelation that Catherine's secret life is another person's is a way of tying up the plot with no such further resonance.

If there is a connection with feminine fictional discourse in *The Abbot* it is rather in the world of the castle itself, a microcosm of conflicting female languages much like the Tower of Glendearg in *The Monastery*. Catherine's wit is quite at home alongside Queen Mary's. Mary's levity indeed seems to have been one of the excuses used by the Protestant party for her deposition. Lady Fleming, her other companion, reminds them that

"... all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly, that the young and the gay practised in her court." (II.viii.263)

In fact, despite Fleming's scruples, female wit grants the prisoners a measure of autonomy. It gives Mary a way of getting back at her warder, Lady Douglas, who "had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves, for real and substantial injuries" (II.vi.182). It indeed effectively excludes Lady Douglas from their company: "I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company . . . where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests" (III.viii.217). However, it will not necessarily help them escape: a chance offering itself, Mary cannot resist getting in a dig about Lady Douglas' illegitimate son, and Catherine thinks, "How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!" (III.vi.169). Their autonomy in this discourse is not in fact the constructive, intersubjective autonomy enjoyed by the young women of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, but a purely negative autonomy generated by their very impotence. They can maintain their dignity in the face of the political violence that threatens them, but political violence has isolated them in this castle in the first place. When they escape, they are once more at the mercy of that violence, and are defeated.

Queen Mary's wit is not in itself novelistic. This is true of all the female speech, even that of fairly independently minded heroines, in the next five novels that Scott wrote. Significantly, none of these are set against the background of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scottish politics that Scott knew so well.¹⁴ When Scott does return to Scotland, it is with a heroine whose ironic distance from those around her is a direct descendent of Mary Stuart's sarcasm. This heroine is not trapped in her castle by political violence, however, but by the cultivated society of a modern spa-town. For this is a novel which is not an example of *feminine reading*, as *The Monastery* was, but of *feminine writing* itself: *Saint Ronan's Well*.

¹⁴ I am not counting *The Pirate* as a Scottish novel. It includes Scottish characters in a political setting where the connection with Scotland is a moot point, but in this it has more in common with *The Fortunes of Nigel* and *Quentin Durward* than the fiction from before 1820. The simple fact of Shetland being nominally administrated from Edinburgh does not make it Scottish, as any Shetlander will tell you. The fact that these three novels, all published in 1822-3, have this in common, invites further investigation.

Chapter 6

Saint Ronan's Well

Introduction: the story

To delineate even the barest outline of what happens in *Saint Ronan's Well* takes up a lot of space, for this has the most involved plot of any of the Waverley Novels. For that very reason, however, it is especially necessary to begin this chapter with a summary of the action in order to understand exactly why things happen as they do in this novel.

The Lord Etherington who we first meet in *Saint Ronan's Well* is the third that pertains to the story. The first married a Scotswoman, the daughter of a wealthy merchant called Scrogie. The next Lord Etherington secretly married a French wife, Marie de Martigny, by whom he had a son, the hero of this novel and known throughout as Frank Tyrrel (25.232.6-12). Etherington never acknowledged this marriage publicly, however, and returned to England to marry another woman, Ann Bulmer, by whom he had another son, who retains the name of Lord Etherington in the novel but is more rightly called Valentine Bulmer. The bigamous Etherington did not get on well with his new wife, and Tyrrel was brought up with Valentine just to spite her; indeed, while she lived, there seemed a chance that he might

disinherit the latter in favour of the former for the same reason, but this never happened.

The two boys' paternal grandmother, *née* Scrogie, had a brother, Ronald Scrogie, who carried on their father's business. At last he gave up trade to retire as a country gentleman. He bought the fine estate of Nettlewood and married a woman of good family, but neither could give him enough status in his own eyes to blot out the vulgarity of his own surname. So he appended his mother's name of Mowbray to it, appealing to some obscure connection with the Mowbrays of Saint Ronan's as evidence of its nobility, and signed himself Reginald S. Mowbray. His son, however, thought that all this was nonsense, retained the name Scrogie, stayed in commerce, and was disinherited for his pains. This son was helped to set up independently by a Godfather called Touchwood, and it is by the name of Peregrine S. Touchwood that we know the son throughout the novel. It is in Touchwood's company safe that a guilt-stricken and dying Lord Etherington leaves the marriage certificates that prove the legitimacy of his elder son, Frank Tyrrel. Meanwhile, the self-styled Reginald S. Mowbray settles the Nettlewood estate on the younger Lord Etherington "*on condition* that I should, before attaining the age of twenty-five complete, take unto myself in holy wedlock a young lady of good fame, of the name of Mowbray, and, by preference, of the house of Saint Ronan's, should a damsel of that house exist. -- Now my riddle is read" concludes Valentine Bulmer, laying his cards on the table at 18.172.19-23.

Meanwhile, the two boys grew up together, with Valentine well aware of the precarious nature of his status. On incurring his father's wrath over some misdemeanour, both boys, now in their teens, were sent to Scotland. There, bored with Edinburgh, they found their way in search of field sports to Saint Ronan's, where they lodged with Meg Dods. They crossed the local laird, Mowbray, for shooting on his land, but Frank Tyrrel fell in love with his daughter Clara, and Valentine Bulmer seduced her friend Hannah Irwin. Valentine indeed, once he had discovered Frank's secret romance, and Frank's plans for a secret marriage, and knowing that the displeasure they would incur from their father would secure him the inheritance for ever, helped them along, to the point where he became indispensable to the lovers "as agent, letter-carrier, and go-between" (26.238.3-4).

It was then that Valentine received a letter from their father in reply to one outlining their travelling plans, explaining the Nettlewood entail and urging Valentine to cultivate the Mowbrays of Saint Ronan's as fast as possible. The elder Lord Etherington's motive was to see the Nettlewood estate and his own united. Valentine saw that if he did not marry Clara Mowbray himself he would lose not only Nettlewood but also the Earldom to his elder half-brother. He arranged the secret marriage with Hannah's help, but took Frank's place at the altar and was married to Clara Mowbray by the Rev. Cargill, minister of Saint Ronan's. This last was induced to perform the ceremony under the impression that the couple concerned had already slept

together, and Clara's innocence in this regard is only revealed to him by Hannah Irwin on her deathbed at the end of the novel.

Frank arrived too late, there was a fight, and Valentine was injured. During his convalescence they agreed to leave each other for ever and both promised never to see Clara again.

However, after Valentine Bulmer became Lord Etherington on the death of his father he entered on an extravagantly fashionable life which left his maternal inheritance gambled away. The threat from Tyrrel to his title and patrimony is now more real to him than ever (he knows by now that Frank is legitimate: see 33.316.23-7), and his twenty-fifth birthday looms. Tyrrel was at this point in Smyrna, and Bulmer tried to keep him there by cutting off the funds he needed to return. However, Tyrrel met Touchwood there, who helped him out financially. This meeting may not have been fortuitous: Touchwood had had, since the death of the elder Lord Etherington, a source of information on all that goes on around the younger one, by blackmailing his manservant, Solmes, with a forged cheque that the latter tried to draw on his deceased master's account. Touchwood was thus able to tip off Tyrrel about Etherington/Bulmer's planned return to Saint Ronan's to repair his fortunes.

All this happens before the novel picks up the story. The reader gathers this background mostly from Etherington/Bulmer's partial explanations to Mowbray in chapter 18, his letters to his friend Captain Jekyl in chapters 15 and 16,

and Touchwood's last-minute explanation to Mowbray in chapter 36. The novel opens with Tyrrel's return to the Cleikum Inn and his old landlady there, Meg Dods. He is an artist, and is invited to the Hotel at the new spa-town that has grown up since his previous stay by its leading socialite and patron of artists Lady Penelope Penfeather. His visit is a disaster when he does not act with the humility expected of him, and even admits that he sells his work for money. Mowbray, the Laird of Saint Ronan's and Clara's brother, and Sir Bingo Binks in particular, take grave offence, and only Clara's unseen interference stops a brawl developing as Tyrrel leaves. He does however meet Clara, for the only time in the novel, on her way home. Tyrrel is challenged to a duel by Sir Bingo, and accepts, but fails to appear at the appointed time. He has, in fact, encountered his half-brother while going to the duel, and accidentally shot him in the shoulder. Tyrrel lies low in the nearby market town after this, thereby disappearing from the novel for the whole of the second volume.

Mowbray meanwhile is preparing to receive the company from the Well at his home, Shaws Castle, where he will host their amateur theatricals. He is however deep in gambling debts, and pins his hopes on winning repeatedly at cards against the rich and fashionable Lord Etherington who is soon to arrive. He persuades Clara to hand over her own capital to finance this plan. Etherington indeed lets him win at first, but Mowbray is losing badly when the other makes a proposal for Clara, explains his necessity, and that it need not be more than a marriage of

convenience. Mowbray agrees to do all in his power to bring Clara round to this plan.

By the time of the theatricals, a rumour has developed that Clara is to marry. Clara appears wearing a new shawl that her brother has bought her, and Cargill expostulates with the wearer of this shawl on the impossibility of her marrying anyone after what happened. Unfortunately, his auditor is Lady Penelope, to whom Clara has given the shawl. Mowbray is publicly rude to Lady Penelope on hearing of this transaction, and the latter promises to revenge herself using the hint she has picked up from Cargill. Etherington sees Clara alone and against her wishes, but she refuses him. He writes to tell his sidekick, Capt. Harry Jekyl, to come up to Scotland to help him in his project.

Tyrrel returns to the Cleikum Inn to find Touchwood already established there. Jekyl meets Tyrrel in the latter's room, where he is shown a list of extant documents proving Tyrrel's legitimacy. Tyrrel does not trust Etherington to keep to his offer to Mowbray, but suggests instead that he will renounce all claim to the Etherington title and estate if Bulmer will leave Clara alone. Jekyl must await the arrival of those proofs that Tyrrel has a claim to renounce before he can judge this offer.

Tragedy catches up with Clara Mowbray before any such settlement can be made on her behalf, however. A pregnant Hannah Irwin has also returned, helped by Solmes at Touchwood's command, but Lady Penelope finds her and connects the story of betrayed friendship that she seems desperate to tell with Cargill's hint about Clara. Lady Penelope's new estimation of

Clara finds its way through the gossip of the Well to Mowbray, and a desperate and violent row ensues with his sister, though throughout they are talking at cross-purposes: he believing she has slept with someone and thus ruined her chance of marriage to Etherington, unless he can force her to marry him before he hears the rumours himself; she thinking he has discovered that she is already "married" to his Lordship. Mowbray is only put right on these points by Touchwood, who explains everything including his own role. But the next morning Clara has gone. She fled in the night to the Aultoon of Saint Ronan's where she heard the dying Hannah Irwin confess Clara's innocence to the Rev. Cargill, and later dies herself at the Cleikum Inn. Mowbray shoots and kills Etherington/Bulmer. He later buys back the land on which the spa-town was built, and has it razed to the ground, before joining up as a volunteer for the Peninsular War. Tyrrel enters a monastery.

(i) The Society of the Well, feminine discourse, and domestic fiction

The 1832 "Introduction" to *Saint Ronan's Well* sets this novel apart from Scott's other work as the only one concerned with contemporary society. Scott's sense of the distinctiveness of this volume in the Waverley set is heightened by an awareness that contemporary society has already been extensively used as the subject matter of fiction in the genre that I have been calling

the domestic novel. This sense of doing something that has already been done before by other people is expressed by Scott in a spatial, indeed territorial metaphor:

The ladies, in particular, gifted by nature with keen powers of observation and light satire, have been so distinguished by these works of talent, that, reckoning from the authoress of *Evelina* to her of *Marriage*, a catalogue might be made, including the brilliant and talented names of Edgeworth, Austen, Charlotte Smith, and others, whose success seems to have appropriated this province of the novel as exclusively their own. It was therefore with a sense of temerity that the author intruded upon a species of composition which had been of late practised with such distinguished success.¹

Scott then goes on to say that this anxiety was overcome by the necessity of doing something new: though fear that your readership have got bored with your established genre may seem a rather negative reason for embarking on a new one. One's first impression on reading the novel is that Scott is not really trespassing on feminine ground at all: *Saint Ronan's Well*, its setting in a contemporary spa town notwithstanding, could never be confused with the work of any of the five women that he cites. However, the question of its relation to domestic fiction remains, and in exploring this we will find that it has more in common with Scott's other novels, especially those that also pose this question, *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, than Scott was ready to admit in 1832.

The territorial metaphor is itself suggestive in this regard, for the word "appropriation" and its cognates echo throughout the book. One of the earliest signs that Scott has not abandoned his most characteristic fictional techniques is his setting the scene in

¹ Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang vol. XXXIII, Introduction xvii.

the first chapter within a clearly symbolic landscape. The point of view is that of a tourist, and the reader is invited to take possession of this unread countryside as a tourist appropriates fresh scenery with his appreciative eye:

This is a sort of scenery . . . where the traveller is ever and anon discovering in some intricate and unexpected recess, a simple and sylvan beauty, which pleases him the more, that it seems to be peculiarly his own property as the first discoverer. (1.2.14-19)

The "ancient and decayed village of Saint Ronan's" (1.2.23) is then described, and the history embodied in its buildings and their run-down state recounted, as the point of view becomes that of an antiquary in search of historical resonance rather than the merely picturesque. Central to this history is the Mowbray family, doomed Stewart loyalists whose political decline has been mirrored by their descent from the castle at the top of the High Street (blown up by Cromwell) to a house amidst those of the family's tenants in the village itself ("whose vicinity was not in these days judged any inconvenience," 1.5.17-18) and eventually to Shaw's Castle about three miles away. The house in the village becomes an inn, and with its acquisition social dominance within Saint Ronan's also passes to the innkeepers and, on their death, their daughter, Meg Dods.

. . . and so, in single blessedness, and with all the despotism of Queen Bess herself, she ruled all matters with a high hand, not only over her men servants and maid servants, but over the stranger within her gates . . . (1.6.21-4)

If we are to talk in terms of territory, then the Aultoon of Saint Ronan's is Scott's own. History, aristocratic decline, the juxtaposition of social classes, the Scots language and the folk-culture that goes with it, all the ingredients familiar from the Scottish novels are embodied in the village on the hill below the castle. But over and against this territory Scott sets the New Town of Saint Ronan's:

These notable gifts, however, had no charms for the travellers of these light and giddy-paced times, and Meg's inn became less and less frequented. What carried the evil to the uttermost was, that a fanciful lady of rank in the neighbourhood chanced to recover of some imaginary complaint by the use of a mineral well about a mile and a half from the village; a fashionable doctor was found to write an analysis of the healing stream, with a list of sundry cures; a speculative builder took land in feu, and erected lodging-houses, shops, and even streets. (1.8.20-7)

Fanciful, fashionable, speculative, Saint Ronan's Well completes the movement begun by the Mowbrays in their abandonment of the Aultoon for the Shaws. It is neither socially integrated nor historically rooted. But like the Aultoon, it has a female ruler, in the shape of Lady Penelope, its founder. Her rule, and that of her doctor, is however described in terms of territorial appropriation as Meg Dod's is not:

About the time Lady Penelope thus changed the tenor of her life, she was fortunate enough, with Dr Quackleben's assistance, to find out the virtues of Saint Ronan's spring; and, having contributed her share to establish the *Urbs in rure*, which had risen around it, she sat herself down as leader of the fashions in the little province which she had in a great measure both discovered and colonized. She was, therefore, justly desirous to compel homage and tribute from all who should approach the territory. (6.49.32-9)

First on the list stood the MAN OF MEDICINE, Dr Quentin Quackleben, who claimed right to regulate medical matters at the spring, upon the principle which, of old, assigned the property of a newly-discovered

country to the first buccaneer who committed piracy on its shores.
(3.28.33-7)

As Tara Ghoshal Wallace points out in her essay "Walter Scott and Feminine Discourse: the Case of *St. Ronan's Well*" this female rule of the society at the Well is largely a matter of its prevailing discourse.² At a superficial level this means that it is Lady Penelope who presumes to give new names to places in the area ("Windywa's" becomes "Air-castle", 2.20.20-3; "Munt-grunzie" becomes "Belvidere", 4.32.30-3).³ But more profoundly, the language that people, both men *and* women, speak at the Well is a feminine one, and the social relations that are constituted in that language conform to feminine modes of decorum and wit.

Feminine discourse in *Saint Ronan's Well* is indirect, expressing pathology or desire. It is rhetorical and transactional, designed to persuade and manage. It is also a colonizer, invading and setting up outposts in the realm of masculine discourse. When Tyrrel meets Lady Penelope, he adopts the "romantic tone" of her "teeming fancy" . . . Etherington, too, when he tries to placate Lady Penelope, adopts her language: "you ridicule a poor secluded monster, who dare not approach your charmed circle . . . you will pardon me if I intrude on your ladyship's coterie this evening?" [32.311.35-43]. It is no coincidence that in both cases, men use feminine language to cede power to women: to talk like a woman is to admit woman's authority . . . Mowbray, like his land on which the resort stands, has himself been colonized by feminine values and feminine discourse.⁴

² *Journal of Narrative Technique* 19. 2 (Spring 1989): 233-247. My analysis of *Saint Ronan's Well* is in large part an answer to Wallace's essay in the light of my previous discussions of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. It was indeed this essay that first suggested to me that there might be more to Scott's engagement within his work with the domestic novel than is normally acknowledged.

³ Lady Penelope also colonizes people, namely any artist or man of letters unlucky enough to come within reach of her coterie. After Tyrrel's first, disastrous visit to the Well, we find the following exchange:

"And your ladyship's swan has proved but a goose, my dear Lady Pen," said Lady Binks.

"My swan, dearest Lady Binks! I really do not know how I have deserved the appropriation." (7.58.5-8)

⁴ Wallace 240

This understanding of feminine discourse as a colonizer inevitably suggests a new significance in Scott's words when he refers to those female novelists "whose success seems to have appropriated this province of the novel as exclusively their own." However, it is vital to our understanding of this novel *not* to simply equate the female appropriation of the novel as it stood in Scott's time with feminine discursive rule over the New Town of Saint Ronan's, as Wallace does when she sees in both "manifestations of the feminine will to power." As we shall see, Wallace is quite correct to thus put the discourse of the domestic novel *within the story* of this novel as one of the actors in its plot.⁵ But she locates this novelistic discourse at the Well. The society of the Well, Wallace in effect claims, speaks in the dialect of a novel by Jane Austen or Frances Burney. Wallace is of course well aware that the distinction between form and content can break down in such a case, especially given Scott's claim, in the 1832 Introduction, that this novel began as an attempt to write within this genre and not about it. Not only do its characters speak as they would do in a novel by Austen or Burney, but Scott finds himself writing in that dialect as well. The central interest of Wallace's essay is Scott's attempt, as she sees it, to avoid being appropriated by this feminine discourse in the way that most of the male characters are. But that the language of female power within this novel is identifiable with the language of the domestic novel remains central to her argument. In order to understand

⁵ I shall examine the interaction of plot and discourse in the next section.

what is wrong with this identification, it will be necessary to examine in depth the role of the novel's heroine, Clara Mowbray.

A good place to begin is one of the ways in which Wallace says Scott escapes appropriation by his chosen genre, namely what she calls his "sly debunking of women's domestic duties and talents".⁶ The only instance she gives of this is a striking passage describing Mowbray's inability to properly prepare his household for entertaining guests without Clara's help. Again, according to Wallace, Scott is at the same time criticizing Clara for this refusal to fulfil what he nevertheless discounts as "trivial":⁷ "Mowbray needs Clara to bring order to his home, and in rejecting this feminine duty, she is failing in social responsibility."⁸ It is worth quoting the original passage at length.

. . . Mowbray was ambitious of that character of ton and elegance, which masculine faculties alone are seldom capable of attaining on such momentous occasions. The solid materials of a collation were indeed to be obtained for money from the next market town, and were purchased accordingly; but he felt it was likely to present the vulgar plenty of a farmer's feast, instead of the elegant entertainment, which might be announced in a corner of the county paper, as given by John Mowbray, Esq. of Saint Ronan's, to the gay and fashionable company assembled at that celebrated spring. There was likely to be all sorts of error and irregularity in dishing, and in sending up; for Shaws-Castle boasted neither an accomplished house-keeper, nor a kitchen-maid with a hundred pair of hands to execute her mandates. Everything domestic was on the minutest system of economy consistent with ordinary decency, excepting in the stables, which were excellent and well kept. But can a groom of the stable perform the labours of a groom of the chambers? or can the game-keeper arrange in tempting order the carcasses of the birds he has shot, strew them with flowers, and garnish them with piquant sauces? It would be as reasonable to expect a gallant soldier to act as undertaker, and conduct the funeral of the enemy he has slain. (10.89.4-24)

⁶ Wallace 234.

⁷ Wallace 235

⁸ Wallace 234

The first half of this paragraph is characteristic of *Saint Ronan's Well* in the (for Scott) unusual movement from simply following Mowbray's line of thought into Free Indirect Discourse and back again to blur the distinction between authorial and character speech. That this is a "momentous occasion" is clearly Mowbray's judgement, not Scott's; the categorization of a farmer's feast as "vulgar" could be attributed to either, and this sentence then adopts a discourse that belongs to neither, that of a social announcement in a local newspaper. To the extent that Mowbray is putting on this entertainment for the sake of his image in the public eye, the ultimate evaluating consciousness in this passage is in fact neither that of the author nor that of Mowbray himself, but that of the newspaper. It is with the eyes of a generalized but genteel third party that Mowbray surveys the potential of his normal domestic arrangements for entertaining a gay and fashionable company.

In fact, this reminds us that all the preparations that are represented as beyond Mowbray's "masculine faculties" are for the sake specifically of the entertainment that he is putting on for the company of the Well. "Everything domestic" at the Shaws is adequate, and given what we know of Mowbray's finances, adequacy is all that he can really afford. There is no suggestion that Clara's contribution to these arrangements is not itself adequate. Indeed, Clara is a creature of the home to a much greater extent than any of the women who congregate at the Well. The problem here is not explicitly the lack of a feminine hand in the preparations, but the lack of the proper class of

servant. In the paragraphs that follow, it is Clara's failure to fulfil her "duty" as a woman of fashion to arrange the interior of the house that is, on the surface at least, criticized.

Here he found himself almost equally helpless; for what male wit is adequate to the thousand little coqueties practised in such arrangements? how can mere masculine eyes judge of the degree of *demi-jour* which is to be admitted into a decorated apartment . . . ?

Then how can a clumsy male wit attempt the arrangement of all the *chiffonerie* by which old snuff-boxes, heads of canes, pomander boxes, lamer beads, and all the trash usually found in the pigeon-holes of the bureaus of old-fashioned ladies, may be now brought into play . . . ? . . . With what admiration of the ingenuity of the fair artist have I sometimes pried into these miscellaneous groupes of *pseudo-bijouterie* . . . Blessings upon a fashion which has rescued from the claws of abigails, and the melting-pot of the silver-smith, those neglected *cimelia*, for the benefit of antiquaries and the decoration of side-tables! But who shall presume to place them there, unless under the direction of female taste? and of that Mr Mowbray, though possessed of a large stock of such treasures, was for the present entirely deprived. (10.89.34-90.37)

This is not "the narrator's sly debunking of women's domestic duties and talents" as "trivial or ineffectual."⁹ One must distinguish between the genuinely domestic duties of household management which, as we have seen, Clara has not demonstrably abdicated, and this genuinely trivial concern with interior decoration which she clearly rejects. The latter is no more a matter of her feminine domestic duty than participation in the absurd theatricals that will be put on outside her home. The discourse Scott adopts here, with its stretched-out rhetorical questions and prominent French borrowings, is that of the Well, and specifically of Lady Penelope.¹⁰ What is being debunked

⁹ Wallace 234-5.

¹⁰ *Cimelia* perhaps undermines my argument here as a piece of Latin, a language that Lady Penelope is less likely to have on the tip of her tongue, but at this point, as Scott draws this satirical passage to a close, and with the mention of antiquaries, he is perhaps slipping back into his own dialect while maintaining the ironic tone.

here is not feminine talent generally, but femininity as it is constructed by a trivial society. The Well in general is being satirized, and Mowbray, in his hopeless attempt to impress it, is Scott's particular target.¹¹

It is relevant here that this chapter continues, with Mowbray "bestowing a few muttered curses upon the whole concern, and the fantastic old maid who had brought him into the scrape" (10.91.20-2: note that Mowbray blames Lady Penelope for his predicament, not Clara), to include his discussion with his agent on how he could swindle Clara out of her inheritance to provide him with ready cash with which to gamble with Lord Etherington. This is referred to by the narrator in chapter 12 as "Mowbray's appropriation of his sister's capital" (12.105.24-5). However much Mowbray has been appropriated by a feminine triviality, he has allowed himself to be thus appropriated with specific ends of his own in view, namely the manipulation of his sister for his own financial gain. Wallace might have pointed to other passages as evidence that Clara is refusing to fulfil her properly feminine role, but where the claims of such a role are similarly subverted by their function as a mask for Mowbray's self-interest. For example, the expensive shawl that Mowbray has bought Clara in order to show up Lady Penelope becomes a symbol of his attempt to integrate Clara into the fashionable

¹¹ It is not just because Mowbray tries to fulfil a feminine role, but because he tries to fulfil a feminine role of this particularly useless type, that he earns Scott's disapprobation. Touchwood, on the other hand, imitates the genuinely domestic skills of women, and is treated with some affection by his author. However, I see no reason for Wallace's remark that his domestic scrupulousness is somehow "effective" where Meg Dods' is "grotesque" or "demonic" (Wallace 235, 234). Both are presented as laughable, but also, as opposed to the company at the Well, basically good.

world of the Well for his own purposes: and Clara's surrender of it to Lady Penelope a symbol of her refusal to be thus integrated.

"Do be a man, Mowbray," answered his sister; "meddle with your horse-sheets, and leave shawls alone."

"Do you be a woman, Clara, and think a little on them, when custom and decency render it necessary." (22.209.4-7)

Clara can hardly be at fault here for not accepting her feminine role when Mowbray is the one primarily responsible for crossing the boundaries of the gender spheres by engaging in such intrigue in the first place; and especially when he is doing so, as here, in order to force Clara into intimacy with the man he thinks is Lord Etherington. "Custom" and "decency," far from carrying the force of authorial approval at this point, are a facade to hide Mowbray's attempt to sell his sister to pay off his gambling debts. Similarly, with regard to Clara's "negligence" of dress:

With this Christian and gentleman-like feeling towards Lady Penelope, he escorted his sister into the eating-room, and led her to her proper place at the head of the table. It was the negligence displayed in her dress, which occasioned the murmur of surprise that greeted Clara on her entrance. (22.210.17-21)

It is clear that the word "negligence" here is not authorial: it belongs either to Mowbray himself or to the Wellers doing the murmuring against it.

According to Wallace, in fact, Clara Mowbray is in something of a cleft stick. The feminine discourse that predominates at the Well is "ultimately disabling and

destructive"¹² and yet Clara dies "because she refuses to be contained, or even to be implicated in the feminine values of order, ritual, decorum."¹³ However, Clara's relation to the society of the Well is not one of simple rejection, nor is she in any simple way rejecting a feminine role for herself in that relation. The point about her non-participation in the preparations for the Shaws theatricals is not that it is a refusal to adopt a properly domestic role: the theatricals constitute an (albeit temporary) annexation of her home by the forces of the Well, and her refusal to help prepare is in fact a defence of the properly domestic against the pretensions of Lady Penelope and her like. She does indeed participate in the performance itself, but simultaneously maintains an ironic distance from it:

The expression of her countenance seemed to be that of deep sorrow and perplexity, belonging to her part, over which wandered at times an air of irony or ridicule, as if she were secretly scorning the whole exhibition, and even herself, for condescending to become part of it. (20.191.7-11)

It is this ironic detachment that characterizes Clara's relation to Lady Penelope and her associates rather than outright rejection. Clara participates in some of the ritual and decorum of the Well, while remaining separate from it and criticizing it.

"But you have spoke to none of the company -- how can you be so odd, my love?" said her ladyship.

"Why, I spoke to them all when I spoke to you and Lady Binks -- but I am a good girl, and will do as I am bid."

So saying, she looked round the company, and addressed each of them with an affectation of interest and politeness. (7.68.27-32)

¹² Wallace 237

¹³ Wallace 233

Perhaps the most revealing instance of this irony occurs where Clara herself describes it to Tyrrel, in their first conversation since his return.

"... [A]nd I try to go down amongst them yonder, and to endure their folly, and, all things considered, I do carry on the farce of life wonderfully well -- We are but actors, you know, and the world but a stage."

"And ours has been a sad and tragic scene," said Tyrrel, unable in the bitterness of his heart any longer to refrain from speech. (9.84.42-85.3)

Especially given that the society of the Well will invade her refuge from it, her home at Shaws Castle, in the form of amateur theatricals, this "you know" cannot but acknowledge the conventionality of the metaphor within which it is embedded. It produces an ironic distance between Clara and her words by admitting their unoriginality, that they have been uttered many times before by many people. But it also identifies those people as the crowd at the hotel from which she has just escaped, and the metaphor as an instance of their clichéd discourse. Within her speech, it makes the metaphor an elaboration of "their folly" rather than "the farce of life." It locates this commonplace at the common place of the Well.

However, Tyrrel misses this irony completely in his reply, and Clara is unable to maintain it in the rest of their conversation: she quickly reverts to the melodramatic mode familiar from Scott's other isolated heroines. She briefly recovers when she returns to the subject of the participation at the Well forced on her by her brother Mowbray.

"... [W]hy should I not constrain myself in order to please him? -- there are so few left to whom I can now give either pleasure or pain -- I am a gay girl, too, in conversation, Tyrrel -- still as gay for a moment, as when you used to chide me for my folly." (9.85.33-6)

In this conversation she is indeed only gay for a moment, for with her next question she asks if Etherington/Bulmer is still alive, and Tyrrel's positive reply again throws the scene into the realm of melodrama. What is demonstrated here is I think clear: Clara's irony is her means of personal survival, a strategy which allows her to be at once a part of and apart from the society of the Well. It is a strategy that does not seem to be available to Tyrrel.

"Poor Frank Tyrrel! -- Perhaps you will say in your turn, Poor Clara -- but I am not so poor in spirit as you -- the blast may bend, but it shall never break me." (9.83.15-17)

And indeed Tyrrel's only options with regard to the Well are either to leave its vicinity altogether or to stay and resort to violence.¹⁴

It is Clara's ironic attitude towards the society at the Well that constitutes feminine novelistic discourse in this novel, and not the discourse of the Well itself. Lady Penelope and Lady Binks may speak like subordinate characters in a novel by Austen or Burney, but it is Clara who adopts the stance of an Austen or a Burney, or of their morally acute heroines, towards those characters as a means of self-empowerment, or at least

¹⁴ I will need to qualify this below in p.306 fn.16. Tyrrel cannot adopt Clara's ironic relationship to the Well, but there are similarities in their situation with regard to it.

self-protection. It is thus that we can understand the priority she gives her domestic life over the ostentatious display at the court of Lady Penelope ("She answered gently, that she was calm and resigned, when her brother would permit her to stay at home," 9.85.25-7) and her self-identification with the heroine of a Charlotte Smith novel or one of its generic equivalents:

"... The needle or the pencil is the resource of all distressed heroines, you know; and I promise you, though I have been a little idle and unsettled of late, yet, when I do set about it, no Emmeline or Ethelinde of them all ever sent such loads of trumpery to market as I shall, or made such wealth as I will do." (11.100.39-43)

(ii) Discourse and plot: the death of Clara Mowbray

Why then does the blast eventually break Clara Mowbray? Wallace begins by proposing the simple explanation which we have already quoted: one simpler, indeed, than she later proposes (see below, p.312); Clara dies "because she refuses to be contained, or even to be implicated in the feminine values of order, ritual, decorum".¹⁵ I hope I have shown that Clara's stance towards the feminine values that dominate at the Well is not one of simple rejection but one of irony, and that this stance is her strategy for survival rather than her fatal flaw. Scott's explanation is composite:

For years, her life, her whole tenor of thought, had been haunted by the terrible apprehension of a discovery, and now the thing which she feared had come upon her. The extreme violence of her brother, which went so far as to menace her personal safety, had joined to the previous

¹⁵ Wallace 233

conflict of passions, to produce a rapture of fear, which probably left her no other free agency, than that which she derived from the blind instinct which urges flight, as the readiest resource in danger.

. . . It is probable she fled from Shaws-Castle, on hearing the arrival of Mr Touchwood's carriage, which she might mistake for that of Lord Etherington . . . (38.358.19-30)

The plot of this novel has been directed to the end of revealing Clara's guilt to her brother; however, his reaction only drives her into her suicidal night-wanderings when combined with her "previous conflict of passions," the mental instability from which she was suffering before that plot commenced, and the immediate threat of being forced into marriage to Lord Etherington as her only salvation from disgrace. I now want to deal with each of these circumstances in turn, turning first to Clara's mental state, next to the role of Etherington and Tyrrel and the way that the plot produces this tragic ending, and lastly to the nature of Clara's secret itself.

The madness of Clara Mowbray

It is difficult to know how seriously to take Clara's supposed madness, and that I think is probably because Scott himself was unsure how much importance to attach to it. It adds a note of Gothic excess to an already melodramatic tale, a foretaste of the isolated hysteria of the Victorian victim-heroine that contrasts awkwardly with the spa-town superficialities of the novelists who are Scott's ostensible models here. Indeed, Touchwood suggests to Captain Jekyl that the social triviality and

intrigue of the latter, in fact the action of the entire novel, is itself a sort of madness:

"Old Scrogie Mowbray was mad, to like the sound of Mowbray better than that of Scrogie. Young Scrogie was mad, not to like it as well. The old Earl of Etherington was not sane when he married a French wife in secret, and devilish mad indeed when he married an English one in public. Then for the good folks here, Mowbray of Saint Ronan's is cracked, when he wishes to give his sister to he knows not precisely whom: She is a fool not to take him, because she *does* know who he is, and what has been between them; and your friend is maddest of all, that seeks her under such a heavy penalty; -- and you and I, Captain, go mad gratis, for company's sake, when we mix ourselves with such a mess of folly and frenzy." (30.286.4-14)

When the crowd at the Well categorize Clara as mad, they do so on the basis of no more than her ironic relation to their own mores and rituals:

"She cares about no rules we can make, Mrs Blower," said the Doctor . . . "[W]hat education she got was at her own hand -- what reading she read was in a library full of old romances . . . And so you cannot wonder if the poor thing became unsettled." (7.66.4, 23-7)

We know, of course, from her comment at 11.100.39-43 (quoted above, p. 304), that her reading includes fiction rather more up-to-date than this. In the light of our discussion so far, we can see that Dr. Quackleben is right to see literature as involved in Clara's distanced relationship with his own coterie; but because Clara has learned from the domestic novel, not from the romance, and because that relationship is ironic, not insane.¹⁶

¹⁶ We are also warned of the tendency for those on the social fringes to be categorized as insane for their very marginality by the ease with which Etherington is able to thus dismiss Tyrrel himself. ". . . There is a strain of something irregular in his mind -- a vein, in short, of madness, which breaks out in the usual manner, rendering the poor young man a dupe to vain imaginations of his own dignity and grandeur, which is perhaps the most ordinary effect of insanity, and inspiring the deepest aversion

On the other hand, Clara herself admits that she has not been well, in that first meeting with Tyrrel that we have already quoted:

"... You saw me but now -- you spoke to me -- and that when I was among strangers -- Why not preserve your composure, when we are where no human eye can see -- no human ear can hear?"

"Is it so?" said Clara; "and was it indeed yourself whom I saw even now? -- I thought so, and something I said at the time -- but my brain has been but ill-settled since we last met -- But I am well now -- quite well ... I think there is some old grudge between my brother and you."

"Alas! Clara, you mistake. Your brother I have scarce seen," replied Tyrrel, much distressed, and apparently uncertain in what tone to address her, which might soothe, and not irritate her mental malady, of which he could now entertain no doubt.

"True -- true," she said, after a moment's reflection, "my brother was then at college. It was my father, my poor father, whom you had some quarrel with ..." (9.82.14-30)

Clara may be confusing her father and her brother at this point, but then she has seen the confrontation between Tyrrel and her brother as the former left the Well and this has obviously recalled memories of Tyrrel's previous visit to Saint Ronan's. Clara's words might be intended as at once a reminder and a warning, as in chapter 11 she will warn her brother against picking fights with men of unknown qualities, obviously thinking

against his nearest relatives, and against myself in particular" (25.228.36-41).

While this is clearly not a misunderstanding of ironic detachment in the way that the Wellers' comments on Clara are (Etherington has motives of his own for casting doubt on his legitimate half-brother's sanity), madness is here, as in Clara's case, used to explain a hostility to the group which has, in fact, other causes. Tyrrel, like Clara, needs to find a way of putting the feminine society of the Well to one side: even violence there, as Wallace comments, has become trivialized, feminized. This is why Clara is able to draw Tyrrel away from his increasingly physical confrontation with Sir Bingo Binks merely by calling out, "Are you a man?": "The crowd was to him at once annihilated, and life seemed to have no other object than to follow the person who had spoken" (8.75.12, 18-19). Tyrrel is able to maintain this detachment only by leaving the vicinity of Saint Ronan's altogether.

of Tyrrel even while avoiding his name (11.102.25-32). Her confusion of past and present in chapter 9, far from indicating madness, shows her awareness of her present situation as a repetition of and return to the trauma of her mock-marriage to Bulmer/Etherington. Similarly, her uncertainty as to the material reality of Etherington when he finally confronts her in the flesh reflects not so much her own madness as the madness of his return:

. . . [W]ith incredible rapidity she poured out her hurried entreaties that he would begone, sometimes addressing him as a real person, sometimes, and more frequently, as a delusive phantom, the offspring of her own excited imagination. (24.224.14-18)

The return of Etherington and Tyrrel: the plot and the already-written

Scott does not finally decide whether Clara is genuinely mad in addition to her ironic distance from the society of the Well, or if that irony is itself a sort of madness, nor does he demand that we decide. It is in Scott's interest, I think, to leave this question suspended.¹⁷ We can already see that *Saint Ronan's Well* is working to the same narrative logic that drives *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*: Clara's irony with regard to the Well, her feminine novelistic viewpoint, must be made impossible, as the autonomous feminine discourses of Sophia Mannering and Isabella Vere were made impossible. But unlike

¹⁷ The unrevised version of the story does not seem to explain Clara's "madness" any better than the novel as it stands, and does not thus help us to decide that she really is mad by giving us a plausible reason. See below for a discussion of Clara's secret.

these two heroines, Clara's position within her novel condemns her to death, and Scott is well aware of the disproportion between the discursive crime and its punishment by the plot.

I have called Clara's irony a "strategy for survival," which implies that it is in some way necessary within Clara's story. We must now address the question of the nature of this necessity, and once again we find the key in Clara's conversation with Tyrrel in chapter 9. In her first comment on her relationship to the Well, she links it to her former relationship with him:

"Do you know, Tyrrel, that very often when I am there, and John has his eye on me, I can carry it on as gaily as if you and I had never met?" (9.82.42-83.1)

In other words, if she and Tyrrel had never met, there would have been no reason why Clara could not have immersed herself in the folly of the Well. She would indeed have been able to do so in the days of their first love-affair: even now she can be "still as gay for a moment as when you used to chide me for my folly." But the trauma of her mock-marriage to Etherington and the resulting split with Tyrrel has made participation in the local social life impossible in any simple way, and demanded the ironic defences that we have already examined.

Why should this be so? The answer lies I think in the nature of the domestic novel itself, and its characteristic use of story and discourse. The mock-marriage separated Clara from her female confidante, namely Hannah Irwin, and Etherington has plotted to keep them apart ever since. We have already explored the importance of the female correspondent in feminine fiction,

as that which allows the heroine to have an ethical identity separate from the society around her. The fact that Etherington seduces Hannah into betraying Clara thus strikes at the very heart of Clara's sense of her moral self. Thereafter, Clara can only construct her moral selfhood in purely negative terms, by defining herself in opposition to the values of the trivial society of the Well. Clara's irony is different from the feminine discourses of Sophia Mannering and Matilda Marchmont, of Isabella Vere and Lucy Ilderton, in that the absence of an other makes impossible the intersubjective construction of a positive alternative to the social discourse around her, and thus a "counter-plot" which might save her. Hannah's role also means that her brief deathbed reunion with Clara in chapter 38, where Clara calls her "my early friend -- my unprovoked enemy!" has a meaning beyond the surface melodrama (38.365.12-15). Clara's words sum up the course of their relationship and identify the ultimate reason for her plight.

At the same time, the story of the domestic novel always tends towards the erasure of the heroine's autonomous discourse: towards her successful marriage to the right man, to the man who can define and confirm the heroine's moral identity and thus take the place of her father or her friend. In the life of the Well, as in the domestic novel, this purpose of marriage is seen to be debased or altogether abandoned in the contemporary society against which the heroine must define herself: the Binks' marriage is a mistrustful stalemate. Nevertheless, that life still revolves around the marriage of eligible women to eligible men.

The courtship that ought to be central to a domestic novel is here parodied in the romance of wealthy widow Mrs. Blower and the unscrupulous Dr. Quackleben. It is easy to overlook, but the novel does in fact end in a ghost of narrative success with their marriage, which takes place just as the main plot of the novel is coming to a climax: the ceremony and departure on their honeymoon is what prevents Dr. Quackleben attending to either Hannah or Clara on their respective deathbeds (38.361.37-40; 39.371.1-7).

Clara cannot take part in social life understood as procession towards the altar, because her "marriage" *has already happened*. All these bad examples can have no positive educative effect on Clara's choice of husband, as that is a choice she does not have. Not only does she have no correspondent to write to, she has no potential suitors to write about. Both confidante and confidences are part of a story that has already happened when the novel itself begins. Clara must thus distance herself in her speech from the marriage-oriented society at the Well, and that speech must at the same time never include the fact of that marriage. She can speak the dialect of the Well, but in her mouth its marital teleology ceases to govern its meaning, and it becomes its own negative, empty and ironic.

Clara maintains herself in the ironic discourse of the domestic novel, but the relation of that discourse to the story is also the negative of the conventional one. Usually, that discourse occupies the space created by the suspension of the novel's ending, the heroine's marriage. In that space she will prove

herself and/or her ultimate husband worthy of that marriage. In *Saint Ronan's Well*, the heroine's discourse similarly occupies the space left by the suspension of her marriage, but that marriage has happened in the past, instead of being delayed into the future. It is the starting point of that discourse, not its end. As a result, Clara's discourse does not have the story to tell that it ought to have, for there is no progress towards the altar to constitute that story. The suspension of her marriage in the past is also the suspension of the plot. That the mock-marriage to Etherington at once puts the discourse of feminine fiction into Clara's mouth, and prevents her story from ever being that of feminine fiction, is not a paradox, because of the position of that marriage at the start of the novel instead of its end.

Wallace also links plot and discourse to explain the ending of *Saint Ronan's Well*. For her, Clara dies because of the appropriation of the Well by feminine discourse, an appropriation which "becomes real and tragic when feminine codes disrupt the plots of men."¹⁸ The narrator himself places the start of the process of Clara's destruction in Mowbray's provocation of Lady Penelope with the shawl: an incident that we have already categorized as the appropriation of a man by a trivial femininity. It ends with Lady Penelope saying to Clara, "I give you fair warning, take care none of your secrets come into my keeping -- that's all" on which he comments, "Upon what mere trifles do the important events of human life sometimes depend!" (22.211.16-17). Lady Penelope says this having already discovered, from the

¹⁸ Wallace 236. This is Wallace's second explanation of Clara's death: see above p.304.

unwitting Rev. Cargill, that Clara does indeed have a secret worth knowing. In turn, Wallace points out, Etherington's submission to feminine mores forces him to pay public attention to Lady Penelope to buy her silence on what she has learnt from Hannah Irwin; this provokes Lady Binks' jealousy, which she vents by dropping hints about Clara's reputation that will reach Mowbray's ears and result in his final confrontation with Clara. The whole slide into disaster in the second half of the novel is thus begun by men adopting this petty feminine discourse.

We are now in a position to see the limitations of this argument. There are not one but two feminine discourses at stake in *Saint Ronan's Well*: that of the Wellers, and Clara's irony towards them. The submergence of the menfolk in the former need not necessarily lead to Clara's death, for her irony distances her from a discourse and not from any particular set of its carriers. But her irony, as we have seen, is made necessary by her relationship to the past. In effect, brought into being by her mock-marriage but at the same time suspending the plot, Clara's discourse keeps that marriage in the past by refusing it discursive reality; by making it a fact of her story which enters into her discourse only as its unspoken origin. With the return of the two men, it once again becomes a fact of her discourse, an event available for negotiation with others, an event which might be used to bring about its own repetition. Clara's discourse can no longer be a purely negative version of others', for her own story, her own identity, is once more at stake. The return of the men in the story has the discursive effect of making impossible

her ironic defence against her past, just as the mock-marriage had the effect of making it necessary. The return of Etherington and Tyrrel is what precipitates all the intrigues listed by Wallace above. Tragedy, or at least tragic melodrama, ensues not because feminine codes disrupt the plots of men, but because the plot, in the shape of the men, returns to disrupt one particular feminine code, which is at once Clara's and that of novelistic irony. Clara's irony cannot survive that return, and thus she dies.

Clara's secret and the revision of *Saint Ronan's Well*

In the novel as it stands, Clara Mowbray's guilty secret is merely that she is at least nominally married to Bulmer/Etherington. We know from the evidence of a cancelled proof-sheet that in the story as Scott conceived it, Clara had in fact slept with Tyrrel in advance of their marriage, a marriage which Etherington's trick then makes impossible.¹⁹ The major objection that most critics have always made to the plot as it stands is that Clara's madness is wholly implausible as a consequence of merely going through the marriage ceremony with the wrong man, whereas the loss of her virginity without recourse to marriage *is* a plausible cause. Others have recognized that even in Scott's original version, the narrative logic breaks down: why is the mock-marriage any obstacle to Tyrrel marrying Clara properly

¹⁹ For the cancelled proof sheet see J. M. Collyer, "'The Catastrophe' in 'St. Ronan's Well,'" *Athenaeum*, Feb. 4, 1893. For other accounts of how the problems with *Saint Ronan's Well* remain even in the unrevised version, see W. P. Ker, *Collected Essays*, ed. Charles Whibley, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1925) 204-5; and Earnest A. Baker, *The History of the English Novel* vol. 6 (London: H. F. & G. Witherby, 1935) 194-97.

himself, and thus putting all right? As Alexander Welsh notes, this can only be explained by assuming that the ceremony itself, the name of marriage alone, is accorded an extraordinary gravity:

. . . But regardless of who, if anyone, has slept with Clara Mowbray, both the manuscript and the subsequent editions of *Saint Ronan's Well* report one much more narrow cause of the hero's estrangement. When Clara Mowbray went through the ceremony of marriage with the villain, she thought she was standing beside the hero. But that makes no difference to Tyrrel: "Were Clara Mowbray as free from her pretended marriage as law could pronounce her, still with me -- *me*, at least, of all men in the world -- the obstacle must ever remain, that the nuptial benediction has been pronounced over her and the man whom I must for once call *brother*" (Ch. 29). Thus the sense of honor goes much further than either law or religion in respecting the ceremony of marriage -- or any of the compacts on which civil society rests.²⁰

Indeed, Tyrrel ends his conversation with Captain Jekyl by saying, "I have but one path, Captain Jekyl -- that of truth and honour" (29.279.8-9). However, "honour" can only explain an inflated reverence for the marriage ceremony on the part of the *hero* of the Waverley Novels. Clara's path is neither that of truth or untruth, as we have seen, but that of irony. The necessity for that irony does not explain, but can only be explained by, *her* awe of the altar; whatever status we assign to *her* "honour", her madness develops *after* the ceremony and cannot be used to explain her reverence for it. In this light, Tyrrel's sense of "honour" does not really explain his paralysis before the "nuptial benediction" either. Not only does Tyrrel

²⁰ Welsh 211. The passage that Welsh quotes occurs at 29.274.17-21 of *Saint Ronan's Well*. Note that Tyrrel's awe of the "nuptial benediction" prevents him from marrying Clara not because such a marriage would be bigamous, but because it would be incestuous -- even though Clara's marriage to Etherington was never consummated, and the latter is only his half-brother! This threat of incest finds a distorted echo in Darsie Latimer's incestuous passion for a sister who eventually marries, not his half-brother, but his best friend, Alan Fairford.

refuse to marry Clara, she never suggests that he should, and whatever explains her silence on this possibility must surely explain his rejection of it.²¹

Only the privileged place of marriage in domestic fiction can explain what its already having happened means for Clara Mowbray and Frank Tyrrel. In this crucial aspect of the story we are forced to recognize a narrative logic which is neither that of satiric realism nor of gothic melodrama, but of the inter-discursive relations that we have seen at work in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. If we distinguish between the discourse of marriage (the outward ceremony) and the story that it tells (its implication of a narrative, the love of the two parties present, within which it places itself) then we would normally understand the truth of the latter as a condition for the success of the former. The marriage of Bulmer/Etherington and Clara would thus be vitiated by its failure to tell a true story about their relationship. That it does not do so is due, I think, to Scott allowing priorities

²¹ Of all the critics, R. C. Gordon gets closest to Tyrrel's role and indeed Clara's when he writes that "Tyrrel's behaviour suggests that in *St. Ronan's Well* Scott was pursuing negativism for its own sake" (Gordon 142). This thesis might be read as an explanation of what Scott is being negative about in this and the other novels and why. My central concern here is with Clara, as the carrier of feminine novelistic discourse, rather than with Tyrrel. It is however worth noting another possible reason for Tyrrel's refusal to marry Clara. Hers is not the only secret wedding in the novel. That of the elder Lord Etherington to his first wife, Tyrrel's mother, is an instance of a common device used to suspend the question of the hero's legitimacy and thus of who is the rightful heir. That of the younger Lord Etherington, as we have seen, is used rather to suspend the heroine in a discursive limbo, and, once Tyrrel and Etherington return, to threaten its own repetition. Tyrrel, left disinherited by his father's public marriage after his secret one, might well have a fear of re-enacting his father's bigamy irrational enough to disregard the fact that Clara's wedding was in fact invalid. The driving force of both Clara's and Tyrrel's behaviour would on this view be a terror of the repetition of the past in the present.

operating at the level of the novel as a whole to enter into the story itself. *Saint Ronan's Well* as a whole is a vehicle for negotiating a set of inter-discursive relations. As a result, the important thing about the marriage is its discursive effect, namely that it generates Clara's irony. As far as the overall intentionality of the text is concerned, that is what the marriage is there for. The marriage itself ought to remain a fact of the story, and as such rendered void by the chicanery that brought it about. But the importance of the discursive effect of the marriage in the text has spilled over into the characters' attitudes towards it within the story, so that the merely discursive reality of the ceremony obscures totally its unreality as a marriage.²²

(iii) Narratorial discourse and the folk

The comparison with *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* thus suggests that we will have to look at the inter-discursive relations of *Saint Ronan's Well* if we are really to understand Clara's destruction. Clara dies when the possibility of feminine novelistic discourse is removed, but that possibility is also removed from Sophia Mannering and Isabella Vere, and they

²² Fascinatingly, Etherington is the one who is most conscious of the invalidity of his marriage, and he too links the assumption that it has made a difference with literary fictionality: Tyrrel reminded him, immediately after the ceremony and the discovery, "that where there had been an essential error in the person, the mere ceremony could never be accounted binding . . . I wonder this had not occurred to me; but my ideas of marriage were much founded on plays and novels, where such devices as I had practised are often resorted to for winding up the plot, without any hint of their illegality . . ." (26.241.29-35)

survive. They do so because there is a carrier of folk-culture available to take over their creative role and bring the novel to closure with the marriage of the hero and the heroine. This does not happen in *Saint Ronan's Well*. That folk culture is very obviously present in the figure of Meg Dods, yet the journey to the Aultoon is the immediate cause of Clara's death.²³ To understand this unavailability of recourse to the folk we must return to the relation between the Aultoon and the Well with which we began.

In *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* we have examined the way in which Scott uses the story of these novels in order to place them in relation to the domestic novel. In *Saint Ronan's Well* we find our spatial metaphor realized within the story as the topography within which it is set. The Aultoon, the world of the Scottish Waverley Novels, is set side by side with the Well, the world of feminine fiction. There is a gap between the two: the latter has not developed organically out of the former. Thomas Crawford, invoking Pleydell's capacity to combine the virtues of the old Scotland with the progress of the new, comments that in *Saint Ronan's Well*, "the opposites have indeed flown apart."²⁴ The alienated opposites of this novel include the two competing genres as well as two stages of the country's socio-historical development. In the confusion of historical and literary context, however, Scott is able to make the antiquity of the manners described in his novels seem to apply to the novels

²³ Nor, given the absence of political history that comes with the contemporary setting, can Clara appeal to the British State as Jeanie Deans and Amy Robsart can: see Conclusion.

²⁴ Crawford 66.

themselves, and indeed the novelty of the Well apply to the feminine novel, thus making the Waverley Novels seem senior to the domestic fiction which in fact preceded them. The feminine novel, in the concrete form of the Well, appears the newcomer, the trespasser, the appropriator of territory; the social-realist novel, in the form of the Aultoon, appears the traditional genre, the native species.

This starts to make the reason for the contrast with *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* a little clearer. In the earlier novels, feminine fictionality represented the already-written, a pre-existing novelistic dialect which Scott could use to place motifs and storylines lifted from folk culture or political history, and thus novelize them so that they could replace the givens of feminine discourse as the constituting elements of the novel. The inclusion of feminine discourse within these novels is at once a sign of anxiety on Scott's part about how, as a new form of fiction, they will be read, and a way of resolving that anxiety. By 1824, however, the Waverley Novels come with their own set of generic expectations. They too constitute an "already-written," to the point where Scott was worried (he tells us in 1832) that he would begin to "nauseate the long indulgent public" with them.²⁵ The Aultoon of Saint Ronan's does not only constitute a content of a particular socio-historical kind that this novel shares with the earlier Scotch novels. It functions as a sign for the Scotch Novels as a whole, in a way that the gypsies or the dwarf do not.²⁶ *Saint*

²⁵ Border Edition ed. Andrew Lang vol. XXXIII, Introduction xviii.

²⁶ We should perhaps not forget that if the "Scotch novel" was well enough established at this point in time for Scott to take its presuppositions for granted, that was not necessarily all Scott's own doing.

Ronan's Well would not then seem to be a negotiation between old and new as the earlier novels were, but the simple juxtaposition of two already-established types of novel.

This is to take it for granted that the Well similarly does not only constitute the typical content of feminine fiction, it functions as a sign for that fiction. This assumption seems reasonable, given that this is how the feminine discourse works in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. The discourse of the domestic novel is not appropriated by these novels without bringing with it the mark of its original context. However, matters are complicated in the case of *Saint Ronan's Well* by the distinction that we have already made between the discourse of the Well itself, trivial, affected, vindictive, and Clara's discourse, an ironic negation of the former and that which we have identified as an instance of feminine novelistic creativity comparable to the feminine discourses of the earlier novels. The difference is that Clara's discourse never tells or creates the story as those of the other young women do.²⁷ Her irony is indeed often reported by the narrator rather than given in direct speech (the example I give on p.301 above are representative), and in general, her discourse is never present in the text as an alternative to the narrator's. Two established genres are indeed signified by the Aultoon and the Well, but they have been concretized into topography; their coexistence has become the setting for the

The years between 1816 and 1824 also covers the period of Galt's greatest creativity.

²⁷ This is of course of a piece with her isolation and the suspension of her story: only female correspondents can intersubjectively write their own story and in so doing take control of their own fate.

story, rather than two rival ways of telling the story. Neither the folk nor the feminine represent a creative principle anymore. The latter brings with it the mark of its origins in feminine fiction, but has lost the creativity of that fiction along the way.

And yet a story, of sorts, still gets told. What happens in *Saint Ronan's Well* is that the narrator takes on himself the feminine fictionality that in the earlier novels gets passed between the young women and the folk-representative. This is not simply to say that the narrator tells the story and no-one else does, as can be said of the thirteen novels that were written between *The Black Dwarf* and this one, for the narrator here is very obviously speaking in a borrowed voice. To understand the inter-discursive relations of *Saint Ronan's Well*, we must look not at the topographical contrasts set up by the novel, not at the interaction of the discourses of different narrators, but at the tension within the discourse of a single narrator.

The narratorial discourse of *Saint Ronan's Well* has always been picked out by critics as especially bad. R. C. Gordon is typical, and most revealing, when he contrasts Scott's style here with that of Jane Austen:

The style of Jane Austen, even in the simplest paragraph of narration, is itself a background of poised and classic judgement against which folly need only appear in order to be exposed. The *St. Ronan's* style, with its half-hearted mock-heroic intentions, offers no such criterion.²⁸

This seems to me to be exactly right. It suggests that Scott's satire here has no positive set of values, such as is provided in

²⁸ Gordon 144.

the other novels by the rural poor, from which to criticize the folly of the Well. The physical distance between the Aultoon and the Well is present within the narrator's discourse as this absence of positive moral criteria. However, Gordon goes on to suggest that without such a base Scott inevitably falls victim to the very banality that he is supposed to be satirizing:

Had Scott maintained a rigorous, no-nonsense point of view he might well have chosen that of the poised masculine intelligence, resisting the inanities of female affectation.²⁹

In fact, the narrator's stance in this regard is exactly the same as Clara's. The narratorial discourse appropriates and ironizes the discourse of the Well in just the way that Clara does within the story. Compare the way, for example, that Clara signals her appropriation of a cliché in chapter 9 ("We are but actors, you know, and the world but a stage," 9.85.1; see above, p.302) with what Scott calls "appropriate" language.

... a *quantum sufficit* of tallow candles ... enabled the company -- to use the appropriate phrase -- "to close the evening on the light fantastic toe." (7.57.8-11)

As if in mockery of his own attempt to appropriate this alien discourse, Scott uses the phrase again to describe the end of the theatricals at the Shaws, and even makes a point of reminding us of his unoriginality in doing so:

... [I]t was not long ere a dozen of couples and upwards, were "tripping it on the light fantastic toe," (I love a phrase that is not hackneyed) to the tune of Monymusk. (20.195.29-31)

²⁹ Gordon 145.

And like Clara, the narrator is limited to repeating the language of the Well and ironizing it without suggesting any positive alternative of its own. The narrator's feminine voice is not like Julia Mannering's, a positive alternative to the world as it is constructed in social-cognitive terms, but a purely negative subversion of the other feminine discourse on offer. This is, I think, inevitable given Scott's attempt to write, not a novel in which feminine and cognitive discourses are juxtaposed, but a novel which was itself a feminine domestic text. The opposition of feminine discourse to social-realism gave the former, paradoxically enough, a positive role within *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. Here, the feminine discourse of the narrator has nothing but another feminine discourse to oppose. It is the very fact of the omniscient narrator's speaking in this borrowed voice that infuses it with this negativity.

Because it shares this negativity with Clara's discourse, the narratorial discourse also shares some of her inability to tell a story. That sounds like a contradiction in terms: but consider the sheer volume of the story as I outlined it at the beginning of this chapter which *has already happened* when the discourse of the novel begins. Also, to say as I have done that this novel has only one narrator is not quite true. Most of the story prior to the novel's opening is narrated, as I pointed out in the introduction, by Etherington, or by Touchwood. When one adds to this the fact that most of the story that is told by the general narrator has only tangential consequences for Clara's ultimate fate, one begins

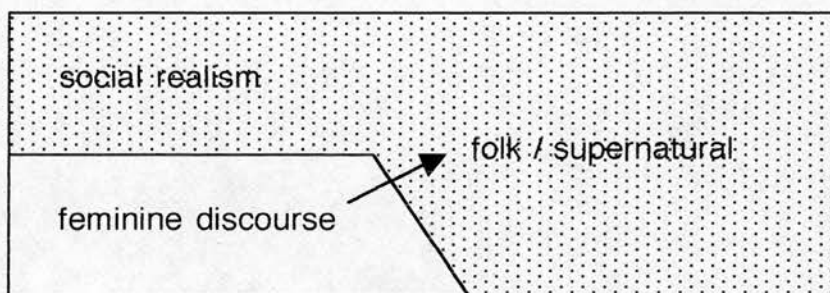
to perceive that the narratorial discourse of *Saint Ronan's Well* is a means of *not* telling a story, just as Clara's irony is a way of not telling her own.³⁰ In contrast to *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, where the story was a way of relating rival discourses, in *Saint Ronan's Well* the story is abandoned as much as possible to the past, and to peripheral narrators who are left to recount that past.

This returns us to the role of the folk. The presence of the Aulton seems to offer the possibility of a folk-intervention to resolve the plot, as Meg and Elshie resolve the plots of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. Yet the very concretization of Scott's more usual cognitive content in geography, in a presence rather than an agency, or rather the concretization of both cognitive and feminine discourses as fixed and opposed, as already-written and independent entities, makes such an intervention impossible. The negativity, the absence of positive creativity, in the discourse of the narrator, the negativity consequent on this writing of the already-written, make it impossible for Clara to appeal to Meg Dods or any other folk-figure as a way of ending the story happily. The social-realist discourse of the earlier novels could absorb feminine fictionality in the shape of folk-culture, but the ironic feminine discourse of *Saint Ronan's Well* cannot include the folk-culture in the same

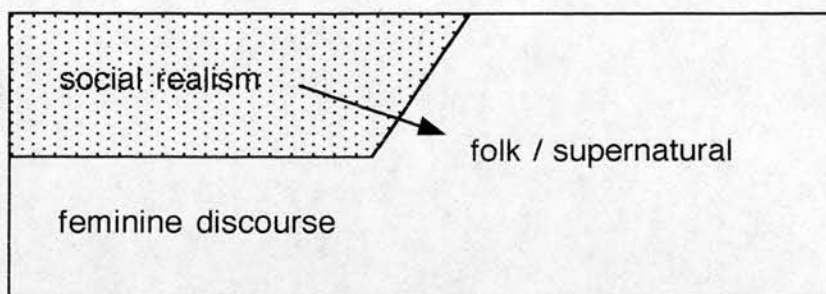
³⁰ Indeed, if Touchwood had been able to drive a little faster from the Well to the Shaws between chapters 34 and 36, none of the intrigue of the novel's plot need have had any effect on Clara at all. But Touchwood can't drive a little faster: P. S. Touchwood, "Postscript" Touchwood (36.341.38-342.1) as he says he was called in this last talk with Mowbray, comes too late, comes after the story has been written. Touchwood is the personification of that very sense of late-coming that, as we have seen, structures the novel as a whole.

way. Clara cannot be saved within her story, because the very nature of the discourse in which that story is told is inconsistent with its inclusion of the folk that would be necessary to do so. The general narrator has indeed taken over the discourse of the heroine, but that discourse does not have the positive resources of its own that would allow it to tell the sort of story in which Clara survives. If *Rob Roy* is an allegory of the failure of the purely realist text, *Saint Ronan's Well* is an allegory of the failure of the purely domestic one.

In Part I, I figured the erasure of feminine discourse by cognitive discourse in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, and its replacement within that cognitive discourse by a folk or supernatural agency, with the diagram below:



Given the abandonment, in *Saint Ronan's Well*, of social realism as the dominant narrative discourse, and its replacement with the feminine discourse of the domestic novel, one might expect a plot to negotiate between the two on a similar though opposite model:



The above diagram describes that which *Saint Ronan's Well* constructs as an impossibility. Folk-characters might be able to carry a social-historical or political agency (as Magdalene Graeme does in *The Abbot*) just as well as the feminine agency that Meg carries in *Guy Mannering*. But they could not be described within the discourse of feminine fiction as they can be in the sociological terms of the realist novel. What Scott needs is some such carrier of a political mode of action which would nevertheless partake of the non-cognitive discourse of the domestic novel. He had already found this in *The Heart of Midlothian*: the experience of *Saint Ronan's Well* drove him back to that pattern in his next novel, *Redgauntlet*.

Part 3

Domesticity and the State

Chapter 7

The Heart of Midlothian:

(i) The domesticity of Jeanie Deans

The problem that we discovered in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* might be briefly stated thus: the young women of the gentry are already defined by the culture in terms of the novel to the point where their fictionality makes them unavailable as objects of knowledge for a cognitive discourse such as that of the historical novel. Yet history itself does not provide closure: that requirement of a fictional plot requires an extra-historical, that is *fictional*, agency at work within it. The answer found in these two novels is to include figures from folk culture, Meg Merrilies and Elshie the Dwarf, who are on the edges of the society portrayed by the novel and thus autonomous from it like the young women, but at the same time available as objects of knowledge because of their place in folk culture. Their autonomy means they can take over the role of the young ladies in their struggle with the violence of the public world and bring closure to that struggle; their knowability means that they can be integrated into the novel as the women cannot, and this integration allows them to succeed in that struggle.

Jeanie Deans, in *The Heart of Midlothian*, seems to be another and much simpler answer to this problem. If an autonomous feminine agency is necessary to bring the plot to closure, but can only do so through a carrier of the folk culture, all Scott need do is make his autonomous heroine *poor*, and he has one person capable of filling both roles. Jeanie can be known in terms of her class, religion, locality and period, where the domestic heroine appears in the earlier novels as an appropriation from fiction, not from any objective reality. At the same time, Jeanie acts independently from her father in a way that both Julia Mannering and Isabella Vere try to do. This suggestion that the cow-keeper's daughter from St. Leonard's should be understood in relation to the young ladies of *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, and hence with the upper-class heroines of the domestic novel, may seem far-fetched. In fact the narrator of *The Heart of Midlothian*, in his efforts to make Jeanie understandable to the reader, repeatedly makes comparisons between her attitudes and those of other women, both upper- and lower-class. Generally speaking, the effect is the effacement of the class distinction and its replacement with the distinction between Jeanie's rigorous morality and the dissipation of the rest of her sex:

[Jeanie was a young woman] to whom nature and the circumstance of a solitary life had given a depth of thought and force of character superior to the frivolous part of her sex, whether in high or low degree. (II.ii.39; xiv.143-4)

The very hour which some damsels of the present day, as well of her own as of higher degree, would consider as the natural period of commencing an evening of pleasure, brought, in her opinion, awe and solemnity in it . . . (II.ii.48; xiv.147)

[Looking at the house at Dumbiedikes:] She was no heroine of romance, and therefore looked with some curiosity and interest on the mansion-house and domains, of which, it might at that moment occur to her, a little encouragement, such as women of all ranks know by instinct how to apply, might have made her mistress . . . But Jeanie Deans . . . never for a moment harboured a thought of doing the Laird, Butler, or herself, the injustice, which many ladies of higher rank would not have hesitated to do to all three, on much less temptation. (III.i.6-7; xxvi.251)

This high integrity which lifts her above the normal standards of her femininity is also of course that which places her in a dilemma with regard to the law, but it is also that which allows her to resolve that dilemma. Jeanie's gender allows her to be active in a way that the male hero of the Scottish novels can never be; her class allows her to be active within the cogitive claims of Scott's social-realist discourse; but she also has virtues that allow her to transcend both class and gender and appeal successfully to the State for the release of her sister.

The success of that appeal also depends upon more purely political considerations, however. By way of introduction to Jeanie's interview with Queen Caroline, Scott describes in some detail the (factual) rivalries and alliances of George II's court (III.xii; xxxvii). Jeanie gets this chance to put her case, not by the benign intervention of a fairy-godmother, but because the Duke of Argyle saved the Brunswick regime in the 1715 rising, and they continue to depend upon, and indeed to fear, his authority in Scotland. He also has more personal forms of leverage with the Queen, despite their public differences over the Porteous affair:

Lady Suffolk lay under strong obligations to the Duke of Argyle, for reasons which may be collected from Horace Walpole's *Reminiscences* of that reign, and through her means the Duke had some occasional correspondence with Queen Caroline . . . (III.xii.304; xxxvii.361-2)

Jeanie's counterplot succeeds in part because a whole set of documented historical circumstances work in its favour.

This integration of the heroine within the world of political action seems, as in *Rob Roy*, to close off the possibility of any extra-historical, extra-realist area within this novel. From the opening description of the Porteous Riot, often picked out for special praise for its historical accuracy, through the novel's sympathetic understanding of the cultures of the whole range of social classes, to a story which works as an allegory of a historical process whereby the fractious, fundamentalist Scotland of the seventeenth century (David Deans) became a progressive partner in the Hanovarian United Kingdom (Argyle), it seems a definitive example of a social-realist text.

Problems only arise over volume IV. Most critics have seen the last chapters of the novel as a sad falling-away from the standard of what has gone before, and, or rather because of, an abandonment of the previous volumes' social realism. As social realism, the neo-feudal idyll that the newly-wed Butlers enjoy on Argyle's estate seems like a fairy-tale in comparison with what has gone before. R. C. Gordon is typical when he calls these chapters "a sad and boring affair, full of irrelevant characters and a totally unrecognisable Effie (now Lady Staunton), and garnished with an excess of melodrama and a fake morality."¹ Even if, given the romance model for Jeanie's quest and hence for the allegory, a fairy-tale ending is needed as her reward, it is surely unnecessary to drag that ending out over 14 chapters. Other

¹ Gordon 95.

critics, however, seem to think that it is, especially if the novel's allegory of Scottish history is seen to centre on the figure of Argyle. F. R. Hart, for example, argues that it is necessary to see just the sort of progress that Argyle stands for in practice, and this is what the Roseneath episode gives us:

Jeanie wins Argyle's [support] through a . . . complex set of appeals. Thereafter, Argyle embodies the hope for reconciliation toward which the book moves. It is Jeanie's triumph to bring into play the force for which he stands . . . To see the outcome, we must have the final chapters, the final pastoral image of a new world in which Butlers and Deanses are reconciled in marriage and progeny . . . ²

In other words, Jeanie's settlement at Knocktarlitie continues the novel's allegory of history, rather than breaking with it.

What both these estimations of the fourth volume of *The Heart of Midlothian* presume is that whatever meaning it might have must be in terms of its historical content. Gordon thinks it has none and is therefore worthless; Hart thinks it has lots and therefore casts further light on the novel's social and political themes. Neither argument considers the possibility that volume IV might contribute to the novel in some other way. We saw how

² Hart 144. Similarly Crawford: "The Duke's Roseneath . . . is allegorical; it stands for the organized domains of the improving landlords, the leading class in enlightenment Scotland . . . [T]he final pastoral is a counter in what has, in the book's progress, become a historical fable" (Crawford 96-7), and more generally, "the development of Jeanie's individual character proceeds in step with a development of the social character of Scotland" (113). Millgate, while accepting that this is what Scott is indeed trying to do, still feels that volume IV is a let-down: "He seeks to bring off the transition from historical narrative to political emblem by a fully orchestrated shift of mode -- by projecting the Knocktarlitie episode as a pastoral expressive of Jeanie's attainment of a restored but transformed harmony and by associating that harmony with the Union . . . But the specifically historical problems prove not to be readily susceptible of the technical solution provided by the move into pastoral" (Millgate 163). I shall return to Millgate shortly in this regard.

Waverley was rewarded after *his* historical ordeal when marriage to Rose finally pulled him out of history altogether and into the domestic world for which he was always more truly suited. Perhaps Jeanie's final victory places her outside history in a similar way, and perhaps this outside of history is similarly constructed on the model of feminine fiction.

To complain of the final chapter's lack of realism is for one thing to ignore as irrelevant to the novel's cognitive task the plot, whose central question remains unanswered by the end of volume III, namely the survival or otherwise of Effie's child. In particular, it is to miss the significance (as R. C. Gordon does in the quote at p.331 above) of Effie's return from London as Lady Staunton. The characters of *The Monastery* are not the first in a Scott novel to exchange their rude northern dialect for something more refined. Speaking to her sister in the Tolbooth, and expanding on a line from Job, "And mine hope hath he removed like a tree," Effie sounds like this:

"I thought o' the bonny bit thorn that our father rooted out o' the yard last May, when it had a' the flush o' blossoms on it; and then it lay in the court till the beasts had trod them a' to pieces wi' their feet. I little thought, when I was wae for the bit silly green bush and its flowers, that I was to gang the same gate mysel." (II.viii.199; xx.204)

Writing four years later to her sister about an encounter with the Duke of Argyle at the opera in London, where he tells her the affecting story of Jeanie Deans in total ignorance of his listener's real identity, she sounds like this:

" -- I fainted; and my agony was imputed partly to the heat of the place, and partly to my extreme sensibility; and, hypocrite all over, I encouraged both opinions -- any thing but discovery. Luckily he [Staunton] was not there. But the incident has led to more alarms. I am obliged to meet your great man often; and he seldom sees me without talking of E.D. and J.D., and R.B. and D.D., as persons in whom my amiable sensibility is interested. My amiable sensibility !!! -- And then the cruel tone of light indifference with which persons in the fashionable world speak together on the most affecting subjects! To hear my guilt, my folly, my agony, the foibles and weaknesses of my friends -- even your heroic exertions, Jeanie, spoken of in the drolling style which is the present tone in fashionable life -- Scarce all that I formerly endured is equal to this state of irritation -- then it was blows and stabs -- now it is pricking to death with needles and pins. --" (IV.xi.226-7; xlviii.455)

The values implied here (the cheerful admission of hypocrisy, the equation of awaiting execution in the Tolbooth with hearing others make light of your relatives without being able to reply); the vocabulary ("sensibility," "fashionable life"); the very punctuation of this letter, are all those of the heroine of a novel by Burney or Edgeworth. Jeanie's reaction is of course partly a moral judgement, particularly disliking "a smothered degree of egotism" (IV.xi.230; xlviii.456), but she also checks in herself a latent feeling of envy: "surely I am no sic a fule as to be angry that Effie's a braw lady, while I am only a minister's wife?" (IV.xi.231; xlviii.456). One of the effects of Effie's letter is indeed to emphasize by contrast the exact nature of Jeanie's position as a minister's wife.

Mrs Butler, whom we must no longer, if we can help it, term by the familiar name of Jeanie, brought into the married state the same firm mind and affectionate disposition, -- the same natural and homely good sense, and spirit of useful exertion, -- in a word, all the domestic good qualities of which she had given proof during her maiden life. She did not indeed rival Butler in learning; but then no woman more devoutly venerated the extent of her husband's erudition. She did not pretend to understand his expositions of divinity; but no minister of the presbytery had his humble dinner so well arranged, his clothes and linen in equal good order, his fireside so neatly swept, his parlour so clean, and his books so well dusted. (IV.x.207-8; xlvii.447-8)

This is one of the few points in the Waverley Novels in which life after marriage is explored in any realistic detail, where marriage is much more than the obvious way of disposing of hero and heroine in the last few pages. It is the only place in the Waverley Novels where the basis of a happy marriage is discussed in terms of a separation of spheres between man and wife, as a contract in which the woman receives authority in the home in exchange for a surrender of the public world to her husband.³

It is from this domestic situation that Jeanie must now write a reply to Effie. This is not easy, for she does not know to whom she is writing, whether to Effie Deans the cowkeeper's daughter, or Lady Staunton of Willingham, the famous wit and beauty.

In entering into her own little details of news, chiefly respecting domestic affairs, she experienced a singular vacillation of ideas; for sometimes she apologized for mentioning things unworthy the notice of a lady of rank, and then recollected that every thing which concerned her should be interesting to Effie. (IV.xi.237-8; xlviii.458)

We misunderstand Jeanie's content in the fourth volume of *The Heart of Midlothian* if we read it only as her reward for what has gone before. It must also be read in contrast with the life that her sister is simultaneously living; it must be read, that is, as the dialogue that they maintain through their letters from their

³ Where the aftermath of marriage is presented elsewhere, it is unfailingly miserable: *The Abbot* and *Saint Ronan's Well* might be cited in this regard, and also, as an extreme case, *The Bride of Lammermoor*. All these marriages are childless (that of the last-mentioned admittedly not having much chance to be otherwise), as is Frank and Diana's in *Rob Roy*, and the Staunton s' here. Indeed, the Staunton s' lack of other children is the central fact driving their plot to its tragic conclusion.

respective milieux. Now, we are not given this correspondence, other than the letter from Effie that opens it, and so Scott here does not simply appropriate the discourse of feminine epistolary fiction as he does in *Guy Mannering*. In any case, Jeanie remains to the end "an indifferent penwoman" (IV.xiii.270; 1.471).

Something more subtle is happening here. David Brown is on the right lines when he writes:

Scott succumbs to a sort of favouritism towards his heroine, just as he succumbs to a conservative favouritism in *Guy Mannering*: in both cases, the realism of the novel suffers as Scott withdraws from objectivity. Jeanie's subjective world-view expands to take over the action . . . the weakness of the last third of the novel lies in the fact that incidents reinforce Jeanie's view of affairs even when she is not present: in other words, Scott takes over the view himself . . . ⁴

Brown has in mind principally Jeanie's understanding of Providence here. Crawford, oddly, takes what seems to be the opposite view: although "[f]or most of the book Scott's point of view is that of the peasantry", he makes in the Roseneath episode a "final shift to that of the paternalist landlords," which "though essential to his plan, makes the novel less universal in scope."⁵ Both Brown and Crawford are right, and both are wrong, in their different ways: Scott treats Jeanie's peasant culture objectively in the first three-quarters of the book, but that largely through her personal embodiment of it, so that we follow her point of view even while that point of view is itself an object of our interest. This changes at Roseneath, because Jeanie's point of view is no longer itself an object. On the one hand, although the

⁴ Brown 124.

⁵ Crawford 98.

providence seen at work there is indeed not just her interpretation of events, but what is actually happening, this is not because Scott has taken over Jeanie's point of view on external events, as Brown suggests, but because someone else has stepped in to shape those events, to take the place, within the text, of providence: namely the landlord himself, Argyle. On the other hand, Crawford is wrong to suggest that Scott's *point of view* here is that of the landlords, for what Scott shares with Argyle is not a point of view on external action, but the role of creator of that action. Scott's withdrawal from objectivity in the final section of the novel is a withdrawal into the role of *author*.

As such, he is free to recast his characters in new, non-historical roles with regard to one another. There is another view of the world here which is not the social-realist one, but is not that of Protestant piety either. It is the world-view of domestic fiction. Although the narrator describes it in his own, omniscient voice, the contrast between the sisters is *in itself* an appropriation from feminine fiction. The structuring opposition of the first three volumes was between truth as defined by the law, and truth as understood by the individual, between the authority of the state and the integrity of the individual: the structuring opposition of a social-realist novel. In the last volume the structuring opposition is between Jeanie and Lady Staunton, between bourgeois domestic virtue and aristocratic display: the structuring opposition of the domestic novel. The last volume inevitably, as a result, tells the story from very close to Jeanie's point of view, as Brown notes: for in the earlier volumes Jeanie,

her religion included, was an object of the narrator's sociological knowledge; here she is something like the heroine of something like a domestic fiction, and cannot be treated with the same distance.⁶

This is not to say that Jeanie herself changes as a character: her virtues remain the same.⁷ But that in opposition to which those virtues are defined, and hence their meaning, changes. It could be similarly argued that Effie too is at the beginning of the novel the same thoughtless party-goer that she is at the end, but her change of dialect changes what that character means with regard to others and to the story. While retaining her speech and manners, Jeanie ceases to be the object of narratorial exposition as she was in the earlier volumes. One can even identify the point at which the narrator himself admits the fact. When a chest is delivered to David Dean's new cottage at Auchingower for Jeanie, who is staying there until her marriage to Reuben, the narrator abdicates his responsibility as an antiquarian for

⁶ In categorizing the Roseneath chapters as a domestic idyll I am not necessarily denying that they are also a pastoral one (as most other critics classify it). Insofar as the domestic comes to be opposed to the public and political world in the early nineteenth century it takes on the role played by pastoral in earlier stages of the culture. Hence we find Mr Percy in Edgeworth's *Patronage* explicitly replacing the one with the other: "He hated Delias and shepherdesses, and declared that he should soon grow tired of any companion, with whom he had no other occupation in common but '*tending a few sheep*.'" There was a vast difference, he thought, between pastoral and domestic life. His idea of domestic life comprised all the varieties of literature, exercise, and amusement for the faculties, with the delights of cultivated society" (*Patronage* IV.xxxix.186). Jeanie's life in Argyle, read in the context of the public events of the previous chapters, is domestic in the way constructed in *Patronage*; seen in the context of Effie's contemporaneous life in London society, it is domestic in the way constructed in *Belinda*: see my discussion of these novels at chapter 1 above, pp.59-64.

⁷ For example, in the last chapter: "It was in such a crisis that Jeanie's active and undaunted habits of virtuous exertion were most conspicuous" (IV.xiv.355; lii.501).

describing its contents to his female interlocutor in the "Conclusion" to *Old Mortality*.

To name the various articles by their appropriate names, would be to attempt things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme; besides, that the old-fashioned terms of manteaus, sacks, kissing-strings, and so forth, would convey but little information even to milliners of the present day. I shall deposit, however, an accurate inventory of the contents of the trunk with my kind friend, Miss Martha Buskbody, who has promised, should the public curiosity seem interested on the subject, to supply me with a professional glossary and commentary. (IV.viii.174; xlv.435)

The division of responsibilities between the sexes seems to have affected antiquarians, too. Miss Martha has taken on herself the same mediation of historical detail to an anonymous public that the narrator has fulfilled in the previous volumes; here he admits that there are limits to his sphere of knowledge, and that Jeanie's new situation is beyond those limits. So a different approach on his part is called for.

We might, of course, be able to dismiss this escape from the public, historical sphere into the private, domestic one as Scott's way of filling out pages after his heroine's marriage, did we not already know how much Scott has at stake in his relation to domestic fiction. Millgate notes how *The Heart of Midlothian* constitutes an "[i]nversion of many of Scott's favourite patterns and motifs";⁸ but its reversal of the *Guy Mannering*/*Black Dwarf* pattern is at a different level and governs the entire text. I have already described *The Monastery* as a reversal of that pattern (see above, p.274). In *The Monastery*, the reversal does indeed leave the heroine autonomous from history, but alone and silent

⁸ Millgate 154

as a result. The narrator's hegemony is maintained, though with his cognitive claims greatly reduced. In *The Heart of Midlothian*, however, where the heroine's relation to the bible is one of the sociologically interesting things about her, and not that which lifts her out of the curious gaze of a cognitive discourse, the reversal is complete and exact. Jeanie Deans begins, as the heroine trapped by history who must appeal to a force beyond herself to escape that trap, as Sophia Mannering and Isabella Vere end. She ends, the inhabitant of a world structured by the terms of domestic fiction, as they begin. The major difference is that where the meaning of that domestic fiction was defined by its opposition to the historical in the earlier works, here it has replaced history altogether.⁹ The change that we saw between Edgeworth's *Belinda* and *Patronage* is here, within this novel, reversed. The other which defines Jeanie's domestic virtue within volume IV is not history, but fashionable life, an opposition internal to the domestic novel itself. That this is the nature of Jeanie's reward must change not only our understanding of volume IV, but also of the previous three volumes in which that reward is won.

⁹ This is why I am able to describe volume IV as borrowing from domestic fiction without suggesting that Scott appropriates the discourse of domestic fiction (he obviously does not). Feminine discourse was included in the earlier novels *in opposition* to that of the omniscient narrator, because its creative presuppositions were in opposition to his sociological objectivity, and the heroines were fighting for autonomy from the political world that the narrator described. In volume IV of *The Heart of Midlothian*, the narrator abandons (as Brown suggests in the quote at p.336 above) his sociological project, and politics simply disappears as a challenge to Jeanie. Scott here does not appropriate an alien discourse, but neither does his narrator speak in his own. In its combination, its compromise if you will, of domesticity, dialect and proto-Freudian melodrama, the discourse of volume IV of *The Heart of Midlothian* is that of neither the domestic novel nor the historical novel. It is the discourse of the *Victorian* novel, three decades or so before its time.

(ii) The posthumous return of M. M.

When we look back at those volumes, what we find is that the terms of feminine fiction are already there, but parodied and subverted in the figure of Madge Wildfire:

[Madge] dropped a curtesy as low as a lady at a birth-night introduction . . . (II.iv.90; xvi.163)¹⁰

This is our first meeting with Madge in person, as opposed to the singing voice that warned Robertson to escape from his meeting with Jeanie in II.iii (xv) and which demanded this flashback, to her interrogation before the magistrates, in explanation. Later, as she brings Jeanie to Staunton/Robertson's home village in England, a purblind beggar woman

dropped as deep a reverence to Madge as she would have done to a countess. This filled up the measure of Madge's self-approbation. She minced, she ambled, she smiled, she simpered, and waved Jeanie Deans forward with the condescension of a noble *chaperone*, who has undertaken the charge of a country miss on her first journey to the capital. (III.vi.154-5; xxxi.306)

Where the comparisons of Jeanie with upper-class women tended to replace the class-distinction in favour of a moral one, here the class-distinction is grotesquely emphasized in order to abolish any claim to moral superiority on behalf of the rich. George Staunton is a nobleman, and has fathered two illegitimate

¹⁰ The connection with Effie, but also with Jeanie, is made in Jeanie's reaction to hearing of Effie's introduction to the royals: "A birth day! and at court! -- Jeanie was annihilated, remembering well her own presentation, all its extraordinary circumstances, and particularly the cause of it." (IV.xi.239; xlviii.459)

children by women well below him in rank: Madge Murdockson and Effie Deans. Madge goes mad where Effie is ultimately rewarded with marriage and a rise in social status, but Madge's madness takes the form of a parody of the terms of Effie's reward.¹¹ Madge's parody of the pretensions of fashionable life prefigures the moral contrast between Jeanie and Effie in the last chapters of the book, a contrast that carries with it the moral concerns of domestic fiction.¹² Madge's tragedy is that she appropriates the wrong side of the domestic novel's moral debate, as she actually recognizes at one point. Talking to Jeanie she finds herself describing her life in biblical terms, as Effie did in the Tolbooth (and as she does *not* in her later incarnation):

"... for I have been burning bricks in Egypt, and walking through the weary wilderness of Sinai, for lang and mony a day. But whenever I think about mine errors, I am like to cover my lip for shame." -- Here she looked up and smiled. -- "It's a strange thing now -- I hae spoke mair gude words to you in ten minutes, than I wad speak to my mother in as mony years. It's no that I dinna think on them -- and whiles they are just at my tongue's end, but then comes the Devil, and brushes my lips with his black wing, and lays his broad black loof on my mouth -- for a black loof it is, Jeanie -- and sweeps away a' my gude thoughts, and dits up my good words, and pits a wheen fule sangs and idle vanities in their place." (III.v.132-3; xxx.298)

¹¹ With fine irony, the narrator also uses those terms to point out that, had she belonged to the class to which she is raised from the beginning, Staunton would never have got away with what he did: "In the higher classes, a damsel, however giddy, is still under the dominion of etiquette, and subject to the surveillance of mammas and chaperones . . ." (I.x.254; x.101).

¹² This contrast, I am suggesting here, brings the moral focus of domestic fiction into *The Heart of Midlothian* in a way in which its simple appropriation in the earlier works do not. In *The Black Dwarf*, for instance, the meaning of Isabella and Lucy's dialogue lies in its opposition to the political violence of Isabella's father, not any moral contrast that is drawn between the two young ladies.

Madge carries within herself a grotesque version of the domestic heroine's dilemma. The opposition between domestic virtue and frivolous pleasure that we found in volume IV is thus implicit in the earlier volumes of *The Heart of Midlothian*, but parodied within a single figure, and a member of the folk at that.

This suggests a kind of flow, of equivalence, between domestic discourse and the speech of the folk-outcast that we found in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*. Where Meg Merrilies carried the creativity of feminine fiction into the social realism of the second half of her novel, Madge Murdockson prefigures the domestic nature of the last volume of hers. This similarity inevitably raises the question of whether Madge might be the repository of the sort of memory that allowed Meg Merrilies to solve the central mystery of *Guy Mannering* and provide that novel with closure. The reversal of *Guy Mannering's* pattern in *The Heart of Midlothian* suggests that this is unnecessary, for closure has already been provided by the success of Jeanie's quest and the resultant transcendence of politics and social realism. This would account for the sadness, the sterility, of the way in which the vocabulary of fashion is used to describe Madge: Madge is not linked to feminine discourse in its creative mode, but at its most trivial. The association makes of Madge a warning, not an agent within the plot.

Another sort of closure is offered by the plot of *The Heart of Midlothian*, however, and here Madge is more likely to be its agent. In the context of volumes I and II, the fact of Jeanie's

southern quest in volume III may, as we have suggested, function as a political allegory, a story that will end with Effie's release and Jeanie's settlement in Argyle. However, the story of that journey as it fills out III.iii-ix (xxviii - xxxiv) is the story of her encounter with Madge, and the gradual piecing together of the relationships between Staunton/Robertson, Madge, and Meg, and this is a story that connects her journey to volume IV and will only end with Staunton's death. The one piece of information that she does *not* acquire here is the ultimate fate of Effie's bairn. The text thus promises two sorts of closure, the completion of Jeanie's task, and the discovery of the truth about the child.

But although Meg Merrilies' good intentions, along with her "twilight sort of rationality" (*The Heart of Midlothian*, III.v.125; xxx.295) indeed seem deposited in Madge, she is unable to help Jeanie in the way that Meg helps Brown/Bertram. III.v includes a repetition of the scene in III.vi of *Guy Mannering* where the hero is obliged, though half-terrified, to follow Meg Merrilies through the woods to the scene of the original crime, reliving it as they go (see above, p.145). Except that the crime relived here for Jeanie is not the murder of Effie's child, but the murder of Madge's own.

"Do I ken the road? -- Wasna I mony a day living here, and what for shouldna I ken the road? -- I might hae forgotten too, for it was afore my accident; but there are some things ane can never forget, let them try it as muckle as they like." (III.v.129; xxx.297)

Madge cannot help others remember the past, because she is trapped in her own. She cannot recover the truth of Effie's

trauma because that is in many ways already a repetition of her own. In fact this confusion between Effie's situation and her own, combined with her frequent inability to accept that her own child is dead, is the mainspring of the story: for we later discover that she took Effie's infant out of Meg's hands, thinking it was her's. Madge has already relived her story, already exercised a feminine creativity to come to terms with the past, but she did so with Effie's baby.

Instead, she leads Jeanie out of the woods and up to the house where Staunton is living, where she will hear the same story as she pieced together from Meg and Madge from the voice of the seducer himself. This is a narrative that requires piecing together by the listener as much as was Madge's: but because it comes from the voice of an educated man, who can, moreover, write it down, the narrator takes this task of assembly on himself.

... We must here endeavour to combine into a distinct narrative, information which the invalid communicated in a manner at once too circumstantial, and too much broken by passion, to admit of our giving his precise words. Part of it, indeed, he read from a manuscript, which he had perhaps drawn up for the information of his relations after his decease. (III.viii.203-4; xxxiii.324)

For all this, Staunton provides no more clues to the fate of Effie's infant than Jeanie was able to pick up from Madge.

Jeanie's journey into England ends with the sight of Meg hanged, and a last interview with a dying Madge in which she can get no further information (III.xv; xl). Jeanie travels north to her domestic destiny, leaving the folk culture hanging from a gibbet

at Carlisle, but seems to have left the possibility of closing the novel behind her too. Yet Meg is the one character who *does* know what happened to Effie's child. As in *Guy Mannering*, the old gypsy woman is the repository of a knowledge which the law is unable to gain. But Meg withholds that information as a means of revenging herself on Staunton/Robertson for what he did to Madge, rather than help the protagonist discover the truth and bring the plot to closure. Just as the elision of feminine discourse by social realism in *Guy Mannering* is reversed in *The Heart of Midlothian*, so too is the role of M. M.. She belongs in the broad social canvas of the first three volumes, and has no place in the domestic idyll of the fourth. The hermeneutic closure that her special memory can provide seems forgotten, unnecessary, in a novel where the triumph of domesticity itself gives the story its ending.

Meg's agency in fact lives on after her to reveal the child's fate and give the novel hermeneutic closure after all, but the mode in which it does so is significant. Archibald, Argyle's man given the job of looking after Jeanie on her way to her new existence, finds a seller of a broadsheet "Last Speech and Execution of Margaret Murdockson . . . and of her pious Conversation with his Reverence Arch-deacon Fleming" (IV.iv.75; xli.398-9) and buys them all up to avoid getting Jeanie any more upset than she already is. He wants to destroy them, but domestic prudence intervenes in the shape of Miss Dolly Dutton, a milkmaid going north to help run the model dairies on the estate,

who said, very prudently, it was a pity to waste so much paper, which might crêpe hair, pin up bonnets, and serve many other useful purposes; and who promised to put the parcel into her own trunk, and keep it carefully out of the sight of Mrs Jeanie Deans . . . (IV.iv.76; xli.399)

One of these broadsheets returns, wrapping a cheese sent by Mrs Dutton to Knocktarlitie: a protective covering for the domestic reciprocity of Jeanie's new life, a reminder of what lies outside it, of what must be removed before it can be enjoyed. Jeanie finds her little daughter playing with it, discovers from it that Effie's boy survived, and thus sets in motion the chain of enquires that will lead to Staunton's death at the hands of his only son and the end of the story.

The fact that Meg's admission has its effect only after her death and in printed popular form perhaps reminds us that Scott finds his originals for characters like her in the old broadsheets and books that are the raw materials of the literary antiquarian. Just as Jeanie ends up where other Scott heroines begin, so Meg ends up where she and Meg Merrilies and Elshie and the others actually began: memories of a folk tradition available for appropriation by a new, novelistic culture. Meg's intervention can provide closure, but only in a form that is already the raw material for a novel. Her voice, transposed onto the broadsheet, can work within volume IV as she could not in person. She could not intervene in person in volume IV for the same reason that yet another Meg, Meg Dods, cannot intervene on behalf of the heroine in *Saint Ronan's Well*: because she belongs in another sort of fiction, another discourse. Those who are left to act out within volume IV the end of the story that Meg Murdockson

leaves them suffer in consequence as fictions. The murder of Staunton by his son is melodrama for the same reason as Isabella's plight in *The Black Dwarf* is melodrama: because these characters are now out of place, out of their proper fictional setting.¹³ Meg Murdockson's last confession too lies outside the domestic, but fits it as its edge, as its lining. A mother figure is here, as in the earlier novels, *abjected*. She is removed from the text, yet remains as a condition of its existence, its existence as a completed plot, and simply as a novel. But here it is folk-culture, and not the feminine novel, that must be thus removed.

(iii) The British state as guarantor of domesticity

If we are looking to the social outcasts for an equivalent to Meg Merrilies in *The Heart of Midlothian*, then, we are looking in the wrong direction. Their very status as objects of sociological knowledge, which allowed them to act creatively within the cognitive discourse of the earlier novels, here disables them from

¹³ Millgate complains: "National tragedy is reduced to the private action of the murder of Sir George Staunton by his son, and only minimal gestures are made towards integrating personal violence and lawlessness with the pattern of public events in the manner of the Porteous-riots sequence" (Millgate 165). This is to miss the point that Roseneath is simply outside the world of historical fiction in which things like the Porteous riots happen. The only violence possible here is personal, meaningless, melodramatic. It is useful to compare Staunton's death with the pirate's assault on Woodbourne in II.ix of *Guy Mannering*. There, that violence was part of the process which silenced the domestic discourse of Julia Mannering, understandable as it was only in the cognitive discourse of the omniscient narrator (see above pp.134-7). Here, violence too intrudes on the domestic scene from outside, but it is perfectly comprehensible in non-sociological terms, and far from being a threat to that domesticity is merely a throwback to a reality that Jeanie and the novel have left behind.

acting within the domestic scenes that close the novel. Meg Merrilies was describable in public, socio-historical terms, even while her mode of action was not; here we are looking for a figure describable in private, domestic terms, even while its mode of action is public and political. *The Heart of Mildothian* gives us just such an agent: the British State itself.

Our equation of Jeanie with the autonomous heroines of the earlier novels already presumes that she is the one who does the appealing, rather than the one to whom another (Effie) appeals: *The Heart of Mildothian* is not, as we have seen, a simplification of the earlier plots through the use of a folk-heroine after all, but their reversal. But this equation also implies that the agent which takes the place of Meg or Elshie as the one to whom she appeals is Queen Caroline. This suggests, as we have noted, that the proairetic resolution of the plot, the release of Effie Deans, is comprehensible entirely in political/historical terms. We have seen how Jeanie's success in her interview with Queen Caroline is partly ascribed at that point in the text to a set of documented historical facts concerning the relations between the Queen, Lady Suffolk, and the Duke of Argyle. Seen as the culmination of the sociological objectivity of the first three volumes, this description is a perfect example of the realism of Scott's historical novel. Seen from the perspective of the last volume, however, the intervention of the state, including the help she gets from Argyle immediately afterwards, seems totally different. "The impression remains that some sort of miracle has occurred."¹⁴ The escape

¹⁴ Gordon 95

from historical objectivity into the Roseneath chapters is facilitated, paradoxically, by the paradigm of an agent understandable in objective historical terms, namely the state.

The comparison with *Guy Mannering* is instructive here. There, Scottish legalism failed the hero because it understood the world as pre-existing, as an object of knowledge, and its own discourse as a way of gaining that knowledge. The feminine discourses of that novel, on the other hand, accepted that the world is shaped rather than known in language, and thus understood themselves as performative rather than cognitive. In *The Heart of Midlothian*, we find the law in a different mood. Calvinism presented Jeanie's class with its own epistemological dilemma: how to distinguish the reprobate from the elect. In their struggle with the state, the post-1662 Covenanters used this to their moral advantage, by taking condemnation by the state as prima-facie evidence of sainthood. Law and rebels agree that the law is seen as discovering a pre-existing truth, but disagree about what that truth is. With the 1690 law on child-murder, which presumes guilt on the basis of a lack of evidence to the contrary, the state seems to have trumped this rebellion, by abandoning the claim to be *discovering* the truth at all. The law takes upon itself the ability to *constitute* the truth by which its subjects must live.¹⁵ Understood thus, the 1690 law is not a legal freak, exploited as a mere pretext for the action of *The Heart of Midlothian*, but a metonym for the claims of the state, or at least the modern nation-state, in general. *And in thus placing the law*

¹⁵ Welsh makes this point central to his discussion of *The Heart of Midlothian*. See Welsh 93.

outside the boundaries of cognitive discourse, the state takes on the feminine, performative role of the women of the earlier novels.

When the law is understood thus, Jeanie's rebellion against it appears in a new light. The law will declare Effie Deans innocent, if Jeanie declares in court that Effie told her of her pregnancy. If Jeanie says that, on oath, then that will be the truth as far as the law is concerned. And the law, or at least its officers on this occasion, expect Jeanie to lie. She does not, because she cannot accept the law's ability to constitute the truth. The truth exists prior to its discovery by the law, and lies cannot be made truth by the mere fact of having the seal of the law put upon them. Jeanie's rebellion is less one of Calvinism than of epistemological realism. It is less in the name of her father that she rebels, but in the Law of the Father, understood as the objectivity of the world.

Like Isabella Vere or Sophia Mannering, Jeanie must find an ally who can intervene on her behalf. But she is unlike them not only because, like Diana Vernon, Mary Avenel or Clara Mowbray, she is isolated from her potential female confidante. Here, a lack of confidence between the sisters causes their separation by society rather than vice-versa. She is unlike Isabella and Sophia because she rebels against the society around her *in the name of objective truth*, and *not* by assuming the right to invent an alternative reality for herself. Jeanie, right from the start, accepts that the only body with the right to do that is indeed the state. The state's capacity to pardon is its

ability to act irrespective of the truth, the obverse of the law's claim to constitute the truth. Fiction, authorship, is the King's business.

- Or rather, the Queen's business. What is remarkable about Jeanie's interview with Queen Caroline is the extent to which politics, far from being the typical material of Scott's historical realism, appear within it to have been domesticized. The Queen's rule must be understood as much in terms of private, personal relationships as of public, party allegiances: "It was a very consistent part of Queen Caroline's character, to keep up many private correspondences with those to whom in public she seemed unfavourable, or who, for various reasons, stood ill with the court" (III.xii.301; xxxvii.360). This subordination of the political to the personal even extends to her acquisition of her husband's mistress as her "confidante" (III.xii.303; xxxvii.361). Queen Caroline is in this sense a domestic woman. Effie is saved by the restitution of performative female-female dialogue to her sister and its ability to bypass the problem of what really happened (albeit that one of the women in that dialogue is the state).

One would expect the state and its ministers to constitute an object of historical knowledge *par excellence*. In fact the state as such makes comparatively few direct interventions in the Scottish Waverley Novels, since the history that Scott is interested in is more a matter of social and economic change than of acts of government. Even so, it is a surprise to find the state, as here, functioning in the text at the border of objectivity, as a

semi-historical agency that takes the place of half-mad gypsy-women and misanthropic hermit-dwarves in previous novels. Jeanie Deans refuses to subordinate the literal truth to a performative speech that would get her sister out of jail. In doing so she repeats within the text the cognitive priorities of the novel at this point. But when a figure for the author must appear, as the one who can resolve the plot left by these priorities, that figure is a woman, a queen, and not a king. From this point on, the author of this novel will be much more an author, and much less a historian; free himself, without the intervention of Madge or Meg or any other supernatural force, to create a happy domestic ending for his heroine. The allocation of all right to performative speech to the state seems to have made the inclusion of the domestic possible in a way which was not possible in Scott's earlier novels. Before we can discuss the full implications of this change, we must explore the similar pattern that unfolds in Scott's last social-realist novel, *Redgauntlet*.

Chapter 8

Redgauntlet

(i) The feminine discourse of Darsie Latimer and Alan Fairford

The Jacobite subject-matter of *Redgauntlet* and its use of a hapless young man as witness to its political and military content has usually led critics to group it with *Waverley* and *Rob Roy*, a return (after a gap of only six years, but comprising twelve, very different, novels) to a favourite subject and a final laying of it to rest.¹ Yet in setting and theme it has as least as much in common with *Guy Mannering* as with the Highland novels. Both stories are set in the second half of the eighteenth century, in Edinburgh, on the Dumfriesshire coast, and in Cumberland; both involve the lawyers of the first, and the salmon-fishers, smugglers and itinerants of the second. Both are obviously concerned with the power and limitations of systemized law much more than with

¹ "Having written of the Jacobites in *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* . . . Scott returns to them once more" (Gordon 149); ". . . the last of three highly distinguished and beautifully contrasted meditations on the meaning of the Jacobite rebellions" (Cockshut 193). *The Black Dwarf* is never grouped with these three as a Jacobite novel, despite its dealing with preparations for rebellion that have a basis in historical fact as those described in *Redgauntlet* did not: remembering *The Black Dwarf* would, I suppose, rather undermine the presumption that the Jacobites were secure home ground for Scott on which he always performed at his best. Of these Jacobite novels, *The Black Dwarf* is by far the closest in story-line to *Redgauntlet*, involving as it does a kidnapping for political purposes, an insurrection that is frustrated before it properly begins, and a mysterious and driven father-figure who has a hidden family connection to the one kidnapped; this quite apart from their common use of feminine discourse, which I shall discuss below.

party-politics narrowly defined. And of course, both follow the travels through these scenes of a young man who is ignorant of his own true identity, an identity that binds him to them in ways that he does not know. Ignorance of their family background is not a problem for Edward Waverley or Francis Osbaldistone; their identities are rather overdetermined, their names forcing them into situations at odds with their real natures.

However, by far the greatest coincidence between *Redgauntlet* and *Guy Mannering* lies in their use of epistolary technique alongside an omniscient narrator. The letters of the two heroes, Darsie Latimer and Alan Fairford, which make up the whole of the first volume of the original edition, constitute a correspondence of the type that we explored in the context of the earlier novel, but with young men rather than young women as the correspondents. Critics have often noted in passing that Scott is using the technique of another sort of fiction within his own in these chapters.² Our study up to this point provides a new context for this observation, however, for Scott, as we have seen, has done this before. We must therefore begin with the extent to which the correspondence of Darsie and Alan repeats the female dialogues of the earlier texts.

² For example, Cockshut says that the reader may "be inclined to feel that in the first third of the book Scott was trying to be Richardson, and that a third of the way through he fortunately realized that he never could be" (194). Cockshut goes on to locate the value of these chapters in the way they set up two heroes to embody the romantic/realistic split in Scott's own character, without noting that such a split thus expressed is already a function of this narrative technique itself, and leads us back to Richardson without requiring a detour into autobiography. Robert C. Gordon is clearer on this point: see note below.

Like the female couples, Alan and Darsie create their reality as an intersubjective dialogue, in which the subject-position of each with regard to the other is being constantly renegotiated. Part of their subject matter in these letters is the difference between them:

Why, what a pair of prigs hast thou made of us! -- I plunging into scrapes, without having courage to get out of them -- thy sagacious self, afraid to put one foot before the other, lest it should run away from its companion . . . (I.iii.37-8; letter iii.37-8)

Their other subject matter is the stories that they tell each other about their respective lives. These stories are never authoritative versions of events: rather, they are always open to reinterpretation by the other, and are indeed written in the expectation of this alternative reading:

. . . I am sure you will, as usual, turn the opposite end of the spy-glass on my poor narrative and reduce, *more tuo*, to the most petty trivialities, the circumstances to which thou accusest me of giving undue consequence. Hang thee, Alan! thou art as unfit a confidant for a youthful gallant with some spice of imagination, as the old taciturn secretary of Facardin of Trebizond. (I.iii.45-6; letter iii.29)

Thus the stories themselves are means of establishing and re-establishing the nature of their relationship and their subjectivities as they are constructed within it. Darsie's complaint here that Alan is an unfit confidant should be taken ironically: Alan is of course the *perfect* confidant for Darsie, since the latter's self-understanding as romantic and daring is one that depends upon Alan's mocking responses to confirm it. Like Isabella and Lucy in *The Black Dwarf*, or Marianne and Elinor in

Sense and Sensibility, this is a double-act consisting of an over-imaginative romantic, with a tendency to understand the world around them as if it were fiction, and their prosaic foil:³

You smile, Darsie, *more tuo*, and seem to say it is little worth while to cozen one's self with such vulgar dreams; yours being, on the contrary, of a high and heroic character . . . [S]incerely do I wish that thou hadst more beatings to thank me for, than those which thou dost acknowledge so gratefully. Then had I thumped these Quixotical expectations out of thee, and thou hadst not, as now, conceived thyself to be the hero of some romantic history . . . (I.ii.31-2; letter ii.24)⁴

Notice also how the letter just quoted incorporates and is shaped not only by the anticipated *verbal* response of the other, but even their responses of facial expression and gesture as well. As in Richardson, as in Burney, the physical separateness of the friends does not alter even thus far the nature of their dialogue as an ongoing mutual constitution:

-- As I live, thou blushest! Why, do I not know thee an inveterate Squire of Dames? and have I not been in thy confidence? (I.v.90; letter v.47)⁵

³ "Scott's very success in capturing the tone of late adolescent banter may be deceptive, for their differences are no more to be taken lightly than those between Elinor and Marianne Dashwood or Elizabeth and Jane Bennet" (Gordon 152).

⁴ We have the narrator's word for this aspect of Darsie as well as Alan's, at least with regards to his relationships with women: "At former times, the romance attending his short-lived attachments had been of his own creating, and had disappeared soon as ever he approached more closely to the object with which he had invested it. On the present occasion, it really flowed from external circumstances, which might have interested less susceptible feelings . . ." (III.iv.100). His more general role in the letters as Quixotic seems to be the creation of their dialogue, however. The narrator's account of Darsie's early infatuations here recalls the narrator of *Waverley*'s description of Edward Waverley's infatuation with Flora at II.vi.95-6; xxix.143 and II.xx.303; xliii.206 (see ch.1 pp.71-2 of the present study), but Darsie's romanticism never misleads him in the broader sphere of society and politics, despite Alan's fear that it might (see I.ii.34-5; letter ii.25), in the way that Waverley's does.

⁵ More examples: "And now, methinks, I hear thee call me an affected hypocritical varlet . . ." (I.letter ii.27); "-- Do not laugh, or hold up your

When we turn to the stories told in this correspondence, we find Darsie justifying his more imaginative reponse to his experience in terms of its function within that correspondence: namely, that of entertaining Alan even while it confirms his version of Darsie's character:

I continue to scribble at length, though the subject may seem somewhat deficient in interest. Let the grace of the narrative, therefore, and the concern we take in each other's matters, make amends for its tenuity . . . On the whole, I still pray, with the Ode to Castle Building --

Give me thy hope which sickens not the heart;
Give me thy wealth which has no wings to fly;
Give me the bliss thy visions can impart;
Thy friendship give me, warm in poverty.

And so, despite thy solemn smile and sapient shake of the head, I will go on picking such interest as I can out of my trivial adventures, even though that interest should be the creation of my own fancy; nor will I cease to inflict on thy devoted eyes the labour of perusing the scrolls in which I shall record my narrative. (I.xii.264-5; letter xii.264-5)

The governing role of their friendship within their story-telling is just one aspect of a general subordination of their other relationships and projects to this friendship. Like the female friendships that we have already examined, Darsie and Alan's takes priority over their other commitments: "All my exertions are intended to vindicate myself one day in your eyes" Alan tells Darsie (I.ii.34; letter ii.25), and the exertions referred to are his legal studies, which constitute in large measure Alan's other important human bond, that with his father. This priority will be dramatized within the omniscient narrative when Alan abandons

hands, my good Darsie; but upon my word I like the profession to which I am in the course of being educated . . ." (I.letter ii.30); "And wherefore did you enter so keenly into such a mad frolic? says my wise counsellor . . ." (I.letter ii.220).

his first court-case to search for his vanished friend in chapter I. Their friendship similarly forces into second place the nearest thing that Darsie has to a vocation: "[M]y love for Alan Fairford surpasses the love of woman" (I.xii.293; letter xii.129).⁶

Alan's relation to Darsie gives him a mode of self-definition, then, independent from the identity that he has as his father's son within his "hereditary" vocation (I.ii.30; letter ii.23). But this friendship is one that Alan's father tolerates, even encourages. It is the appearance of a father-figure for Darsie, his paternal uncle Hugh Redgauntlet, that interrupts their correspondence in the way that the feminine discourse of *Guy Mannering* or *The Black Dwarf* is interrupted by Colonel Mannering or Richard Vere. Darsie is kidnapped, just as Isabella Vere is kidnapped, for political ends, and in consequence the dialogue with Alan is broken. The difference is that Darsie, despite the impossibility of reply, *continues to write*. He even continues to address Alan from time to time, sometimes in the second person and sometimes in the third, in the hope that his journal will eventually reach his friend's hands:

The rage of narration, my dear Alan -- for I will never relinquish the hope that what I am writing will one day reach your hands -- has not forsaken me, even in my confinement, and the extensive though unimportant details into which I have been hurried, renders it necessary that I commence another sheet . . . (II.iii.73; chapter iii.169)

⁶ Again, the narrator takes care to confirm this independently: "[N]either of them sought or desired to admit any others into their society. Alan Fairford was averse to general company, from a disposition naturally reserved, and Darsie Latimer from a painful sense of his own unknown origin . . . The young men were all in all to each other . . ." (II.1.9; chapter i.143).

On one level, this writing can be seen as Darsie's mode of resistance to his kidnapping, as it is Pamela's, as it is Clarissa's, enabling him to maintain an identity in his relation to an other independent of the identity being forced on him by his kidnapper.⁷ At the same time as he addresses Alan, however, Darsie also addresses an anonymous reader, the unknown person who might find this journal after his death or disappearance or abduction abroad, and in doing so is obliged to build in a new aspect to his identity: loyalty, not to a friend, but to the British State:

Those who read this Journal, if it shall be perused by impartial eyes, shall judge of me truly; and if they consider me as a fool in encountering danger unnecessarily, they shall have no reason to believe me a coward or a turncoat, when I find myself engaged in it. I have been bred in sentiments of attachment to the family on the throne, and in these sentiments I will live and die. (II.viii.192-3; chapter viii.217-8)

I will return to this point later.

In addition to the autonomous identity that Darsie can maintain in his writing by virtue of its posited addressee, his journal also seems to help him resist his uncle simply as writing.

⁷ Indeed, Darsie realizes "the probability that my papers may be torn from me, and subjected to the inspection of one in particular, who, causelessly my enemy already, may be yet further incensed at me for recording the history of my wrongs" (II.iii.54; chapter iii.162) i.e. that, as in *Pamela*, the kidnapper himself will become the reader of this writing. As in *Pamela*, Darsie secrets his writing within his clothes to prevent this happening ("by concealing it within the lining of my coat" II.v.114; chapter v.144), but also hopes that, as in *Pamela*, reading it might force the kidnapper to see the error of his ways: ". . . I have, as I have elsewhere intimated, had hitherto the comfortable reflection, that if the record of my misfortunes should fall into the hands of him by whom they are caused, they would, without harming any one, show him the real character and disposition of the person who has become his prisoner -- perhaps his victim" (II.ix.196; chapter ix.219).

Even written with no expectation of another reader, the act of writing itself seems to strengthen Darsie's position:

True, no friendly eye may ever look upon these labours, which have amused the solitary hours of an unhappy prisoner. Yet, in the meanwhile, the exercise of the pen seems to act as a sedative upon my own agitated thoughts and tumultuous passions. I never lay it down but I rise stronger in resolution, more ardent in hope. A thousand vague fears, wild expectations, and indigested schemes, hurry through one's thoughts in seasons of doubt and of danger. But by arresting them as they flit across the mind, by throwing them on paper, and even by that mechanical act compelling ourselves to consider them with scrupulous and minute attention, we may perhaps escape becoming the dupes of our own excited imagination . . . (II.ix.195-6; chapter ix.219)

Note that the strength given Darsie here is understood by him as the strength to resist his imagination. Before his kidnapping, Darsie could foster an over-imaginative response to the world in his correspondence with Alan as a way of defining himself in opposition to his friend, in the expectation that Alan's response would reaffirm a different and more stable reality. Now, unable to write in that expectation, Darsie has to build that sort of anti-imaginative counterweight into his writing in some other way, and it is writing as such, the "exercise of the pen", the mere "mechanical act" of writing, that takes over Alan's function in this regard. The point at which writing as such takes on this role can be seen at the beginning of the Journal. The envelope in which it is enclosed is inscribed with an address to an anonymous reader, and refers to Alan in the third person; the text itself, however, begins "MY DEAREST ALAN," and for a paragraph addresses him in the second person. But this paragraph includes the sentence, "A portion of my former spirit descends to my pen, when I write your name . . ." (II.iii.52-3; chapter iii.161), where the physical

act of writing Alan's name is what at once reconstitutes their relationship but at the same time gives Darsie a strength that is independent of any reply from Alan. In the text that follows, Alan is sometimes addressed directly and sometimes referred to in the third person once more, but he is never again the addressee of the text in that it does not presume that its reader has the knowledge of the story so far that Alan uniquely has. Except, that is, in one particular aspect of that story: and to this, too, I shall return.

(ii) Delay and the restoration of feminine discourse

This autonomy that Darsie gains from writing is important precisely because Darsie's autonomy of will is otherwise abandoned. Writing is his only mode of action once he is in Redgauntlet's hands. Plans of future action are as pointless as expectations of a reply to his writing from Alan are unreal. The "petty trivialities" of past incident that had previously provided the raw material for Darsie's exaggeration and Alan's deflating response are now a refuge from a future over which Darsie has no control at all:

These particulars may appear trivial; but it is better, in my present condition, to exert my faculties in recollecting the past, and in recording it, than waste them in vain and anxious anticipations of the future. (II.iii.61; chapter iii.164)

But in addition to this imposed powerlessness in the face of an unknowable future, Darsie also admits that he is content to let events take their course:

In the meantime, there has stolen on me insensibly an indifference to my freedom -- a carelessness about my situation, for which I am unable to account . . .

Yet my inactivity is not the result of despondency, but arises, in part at least, from feelings of a very different cast. My story, long a mysterious one, seems now upon the verge of some strange development; and I feel a solemn impression that I ought to wait the course of events, to struggle against which is opposing my feeble efforts against the will of fate. Thou, my Alan, wilt treat as timidity this passive acquiescence, which has sunk down on me like a benumbing torpor; but if thou hast remembered by what visions my couch was haunted, and dost but think of the probability that I am in the vicinity, perhaps under the same roof with G. M., thou wilt acknowledge that other feelings than pusillanimity have tended in some degree to reconcile me to my fate.

Still I own it is unmanly to submit with patience to this oppressive confinement. My heart rises against it, especially when I sit down to record my sufferings in this Journal; and I am determined, as the first step to my deliverance, to have my letters sent to the post-house. (II.v.102-3; chapter v.181-2)

Here we find the one type of context in which Darsie addresses Alan directly after his kidnap; that is, any context that requires reference to "G. M.," Greenmantle, the young woman (actually Darsie's sister) whose unexplained interest in Darsie's situation has led her to appeal in person to both of them.⁸ She is a sign of the continuing uniqueness of Darsie's relationship with Alan, a secret that they share, despite Darsie's now general address to an unknown reader, rather as Brown functions in the Julia-Matilda correspondence of *Guy Mannering* as a sign of the uniqueness of their friendship. But she also functions here as a justification for Darsie's unwillingness to attempt escape. As such, she is

⁸ She is also named, admittedly, when Darsie is addressing Alan *indirectly*: "Alan Fairford will understand me when I say, I am convinced I saw G. M. during this interval of oblivion" (II.iv.96).

associated with "the high will of fate", which Darsie has a sense (not unreasonable, if melodramatically expressed) is going to reveal to him his true identity. As such, in fact, she signifies Darsie's abandonment of writing as a mode of resistance to Redgauntlet's political schemes. Darsie writes his identity as Alan's friend and loyal Hanovarian, but he does not attempt to write his own story, the story that will reveal his familial identity and true relation to Greenmantle and Redgauntlet. That story, of course, is the story of *Redgauntlet*. In the epistolary chapters, the young men were free to write their own story in a collaborative effort. In Darsie's journal, this is no longer the case: the narrative technique of this novel at this point is at odds with the story that is told thereby. Darsie as narrator is thus in exactly the position of Julia Mannering as narrator in II.ix-x of *Guy Mannering*.

We find this same paradoxical position of Greenmantle (at once sign of Darsie and Alan's autonomy, and sign of the irrelevance of that autonomy to the outcome of the story) in the conflicting advice that she gives Darsie on different occasions. When Darsie first meets Greenmantle at the dance at Brokenburn, she berates him for his passivity and for drifting into low company, unaware that her presence itself is Darsie's main motive for remaining in the area:

"Is it manly to wait till fortune cast her beams upon you, when by exertion of your own energy you might distinguish yourself? -- Do not the pursuits of learning lie open to you -- of manly ambition -- of war? -- But no -- not of war, that has already cost you too dear."

"I will be what you wish me to be," I replied with eagerness -- "You have but to choose my path, and you shall see if I do not pursue it with energy, were it only because you command me."

"Not because I command you," said the maiden, "but because reason, common sense, manhood, and in one word, regard for your own safety, give the same counsel." (I.xii.283-4; letter xii.126)

Even this exhortation to take his fate in his own hands leaves a problem in what exactly Greenmantle means by "manly" and "manhood." For the traditional masculine mode of grasping one's fate in a situation like Darsie's is just the one that Greenmantle stumbles over and then retracts: violence. "Manhood" stands out in her list of reasons to do as she says: it is hard to see what is so uniquely "manly" about reason, common sense, and regard for one's own safety. After Darsie's kidnap, Greenmantle's advice makes no such incongruous appeal to Darsie's gender, and she recommends exactly the sort of passivity that he has adopted anyway as the best way of coping with Redgauntlet's coercion. She leaves a poem in the room to which he is confined:

"As lords their labourers' hire delay,
Fate quits our toil with hopes to come,
Which, if far short of present pay,
Still owns a debt and names a sum.

Quit not the pledge, frail sufferer, then,
Although a distant date be given;
Despair is treason towards man,
And blasphemy to Heaven,"

(II.ix.206-7; chapter ix.224)

And later she is able to give the same advice face-to-face:

"But you may temporize," said Lillas, upon whom the idea of her uncle's displeasure made evidently a strong impression, -- "you may temporize, and let the bubble burst of itself, as most of the gentry in this country do . . ." (III.v.151; chapter xviii.331)

When, shortly after, his uncle begins pressuring him to commit himself to the cause, this is the tactic that Darsie adopts: "He therefore concluded the enterprize would fall to pieces of itself, and that his best way was, in the meantime, to remain silent . . ." (III.vi.178; chapter xix.341).

Lilias gives Alan exactly the same advice:

Lilias suggested the advice which, of all others, seemed most suited to the occasion, that, yielding, namely, to the circumstances of their situation, they should watch carefully when Darsie should obtain any degree of freedom, and endeavour to open a communication with him, in which case their joint flight might be effected, and without endangering the safety of any one. (III.x.302; chapter xix.390)

Alan, like Darsie, does as she says, despite his earlier resolution to "counterplot" the Jacobites (III.iii.75; chapter xvi.300),⁹ and despite the complete reversal of the gender-roles set up just four paragraphs before:

The relative situation of adviser and advised, of protector and protected, is so peculiarly suited to the respective condition of man and woman, that great progress towards intimacy is often made in very short space. (III.x.299-300; chapter xxiii.389)

This tactic of delay is, of course, successful, for the rebellion does indeed fall to pieces of itself. Now, it would be going too far to say that Lilias is thus responsible for the survival of the two young men and the successful outcome of the plot, for Darsie, with the prospect before him of his identity at last being

⁹ Note how Alan's term "counterplot" here echoes, at a distance of eight years, Lucy's suggestion that she and Isabella construct a "supplemental conspiracy" against Vere and *his* Jacobites. Alan's counterplot comes to nothing just as Lucy's does, but delay is an option for Alan as it is not for Isabella, who must appeal to a third party for her rescue.

revealed, tends to wait and see from the start, and neither Alan nor Darsie are ever in any serious danger other than that offered by the sea or a bad fever. But the fact that a young woman advises delay, coupled with her own characterization of it as somehow not manly, characterizes the young men's survival strategy as *feminine*.

This gendering of delay is confirmed by the circumstances of Darsie's interview with Lillas in III.v (chapter xviii) in which she advises it: an appeal to Darsie's manhood here would indeed be incongruous, for at this point Darsie is dressed in a skirt, perched on a side-saddle and wearing what looks like a riding veil (but is in fact a mask). It is in this discussion that Darsie learns that Greenmantle, the object of his desire, is in fact Lillas, his sister, and that Hugh Redgauntlet is their uncle; she tells him how he was kept from the hands of the latter by their mother, who sent him to be raised in Scotland. In other words, Lillas brings Darsie's story, in so far as that story is the search for his origins, to an end. As Alan predicted, "the Unknown She of the Green Mantle" proves able after all to "read this, the riddle of thy fate, better than wise Eppie of Buckhaven, or Cassandra herself" (I.viii.186; letter viii.85). From this point on the young people will be no more than observers as the rebellion collapses around them.

Why must Darsie complete his quest dressed as a woman? It is Redgauntlet's vicious sidekick, Cristal Nixon, of all people, who tells us why: "Come, young ladies, you have had time enough for your chat this morning, and your tongues, I think,

must be tired" (III.v.156; chapter xviii.333). *Darsie's conversation with Liliash constitutes the restoration within the novel of feminine discourse*, of the type of discourse that he lost when he could no longer write to Alan. For Liliash, she tells us herself, has maintained her own autonomy from her mentor despite her apparent collusion in his political views. Redgauntlet tells her that "You may use my permission and authority, to explain so much of our family matters as you yourself know" to Darsie (III.iv.111; chapter xvii.315), but in fact she tells him a story quite different from the one that Redgauntlet would recognize. In this she is different from the Scott heroine who she otherwise most resembles, Diana Vernon, who is genuinely committed to the Stewarts. She has Diana's freedom of speech, indeed, but Darsie's initial shock at her lack of decorum with a young unmarried male evaporates with the discovery that she is his sister. She ceases to be the object of fascination that he had constructed in his letters to Alan and which had kept him hovering around Brokenburn, and becomes instead a replacement correspondent.¹⁰

¹⁰ Liliash is assimilated to the sensible young lady of domestic fiction by Darsie's free indirect discourse between losing her as a love-object and acquiring her as a relation, i.e. when he is forced to listen to how she speaks as it is in itself: "Liliash, on her part, endeavoured to prevail upon Darsie to partake of the food which she offered him, with a kindly and affectionate courtesy, corresponding to the warmth of the interest she had displayed at their meeting; but so very natural, innocent, and pure in its character, that it would have been impossible for the vainest coxcomb to have mistaken it for coquetry, or a desire of captivating a prize so valuable as his affections"; "Miss Liliash's manners, however soft and natural, displayed in their ease and versatility considerable acquaintance with the habits of the world, and in the few words she said during the morning repast, there was mingled a shrewdness and good sense which could scarce belong to a Miss capable of playing the silly part of a love-smitten maiden so broadly" (III.iv.107-8; chapter xvii.313-4). Judith Wilt writes: "To discover in place of a lady-love a practical sister, who has her whole life

In *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, we have seen how Julia Mannering and Isabella Vere maintain an autonomy of identity from their fathers in their correspondence. Once that correspondence becomes impossible, their stories can only be ended happily by the intervention of a third party, a representative of the folk. It seems that *Redgauntlet* regains that feminine autonomy for its hero as a means of bringing the plot to closure instead of such an appeal. However, this appeal was necessary in the earlier novels, we have argued, to provide closure to the plot despite the novel's general claim to a particular type of cognitive status, that of historical or social realism. *Redgauntlet* does indeed, like *Guy Mannering*, set up an initial opposition between intersubjective writing, as a primarily performative discourse, and the purely cognitive discourse associated with the law, suggesting that the latter might be able to reveal the truth about the hero in its own factual terms. Darsie writes to Alan early in his first letter, summarizing what he knows of his past:

I repeat the little history now, as I have a hundred times done before, merely because I would wring some sense out of it. Turn, then, thy sharp, wire-drawing, lawyer-like ingenuity to the same task -- make up my history as though thou wert shaping the blundering allegations of some blue-bonneted, hard-headed client, into a condescendence of facts and circumstances, and thou shalt be, not my Apollo -- *quid tibi cum lyra?* --

been temporizing with and cleverly evading in womanly fashion the tyranny of their uncle . . . is for Darsie to discover not a fantasy but a model" (Wilt 150). I think this is exactly right, except that the model that Lillas provides is not only for Darsie's behaviour, but also for his speech; and it is clear from the way it is described in these quotes that the model speech provided is that of domestic fiction. At first he finds he cannot enter a dialogue in that speech, because sexual desire disrupts discourse as it does between Diana and Frank. Before he discovers that Lillas is his sister, in other words, Lillas' speech is indeed a model in Kristeva's sense, a language as such, as it is in itself.

but my Lord Stair. Meanwhile, I have written myself out of my melancholy and blue devils, merely by prosing about them . . . (I.i.14; letter i.17)

And as in *Guy Mannering*, the law does not succeed in recovering the hero's past. That is done, however, within a dialogue between Lillas and a feminized Darsie, a feminine discourse of the sort that is frustrated in the earlier novel, and not by anyone like Meg Merrilies or Elshie the Dwarf; a dialogue that is itself a mode of action, in its production of a new identity for Darsie, rendering the physical modes of action of Elshie or Meg irrelevant. This raises the question of the cognitive status of *Redgauntlet*, and whether folk-culture makes the sort of intervention in its plot necessitated in the earlier novels by their cognitive claims.

(iii) Folk culture and the plot

It might be answered that, in perfect accordance with the model of inter-discursive relations in Scott's novels that we have built up, no such intervention by a folk-figure is necessary in *Redgauntlet* because it makes none of these cognitive claims. For all its historical and political content, *Redgauntlet* does not build up a picture of a society consisting of various social classes in their mutual interdependence of the sort that we might expect. Its characters come from a wide range of the social spectrum, indeed, and we discover something of their social and historical circumstances: of the tensions between the spear-fishermen who catch salmon on the estuary, and those who net them at the

Solway mouth; of the awkward social position of a man like Provost Crombie, obliged by his position to proclaim loyalty to the government despite having Jacobite friends and relations. However, these tensions and characters never tell us very much about the structure of their society as a whole. Neither Joshua Geddes nor Redgauntlet, for example, represent any sort of class norm in the way that Dandie Dinmont, or Bailie Jarvie, or David Deans, or the Elliots do, and as a result do not carry with them a general context that gives meaning to their individual actions. The clash over the fishing station represents a clash between particular individuals, and not a clash between, say, puritan industry and feudal sport. Joshua Geddes, as a Quaker, is not a typical southwest of Scotland Protestant, and Redgauntlet is too exceptionally fanatical to be a representative Tory gentleman. Similarly, both Tam Trumbull and Nanty Ewart are too particularized to represent a way of life, with a shared culture and an economics that ties them into the society around them, in the way that Meg Merrilies, for all her individuality, does represent a way of life. This is in part because the social groups that these people *do* belong to are *all* marginalized: there is no peasantry, for example, or lower gentry like the Bertrams, complicit in the acts of the smugglers, tolerant of the travellers, borrowing money (perhaps) from the Quakers, to provide the ground for these groups' mutual economic dependence. The society of the Solway area as represented in *Redgauntlet* is all margins with no linking core.

However, although *Redgauntlet* does not portray a complete society in the way that *Guy Mannering* does, Darsie is, like Mannering himself, an amateur antiquarian and folklorist.

... I could not help taking the bottle in my hand, to look more at the armorial bearings, which were chased with considerable taste on the silver frame-work. Encountering the eye of my entertainer, I instantly saw that my curiosity was highly distasteful . . . (I.iv.77; letter iv.41-2)

Black-letter, you know, was my early passion, and the tomb-stones in the Grey-Friars' Church-yard early yielded up to my knowledge as a decipherer what little they could tell of the forgotten dead. (I.vii.139; letter vii.66)

... and as you know I like tales of superstition, I begged to have a specimen of his talent as we went along. (I.xi.224; letter xi.102)

In the latter case, of course, the novel itself shares Darsie's interest, since we get "Wandering Willie's Tale" included in the text in its entirety. Here we can see a difference between the young Guy Mannering and Darsie, and between their respective novels, for where Liv of *Guy Mannering* presents, not Meg's original song, but Mannering's paraphrase of it, "Wandering Willie's Tale" is presented as it was told to Darsie by Willie himself. And just as *Redgauntlet* includes folk-culture without positing a narratorial intermediary, so Darsie does not just collect folk-culture, understanding and appreciating it from the distance produced by his class and education, he actually participates in it. He too is a musician, and knows the tunes that Willie plays on his fiddle.

He preluded as he spoke, in a manner which really excited my curiosity; and then taking the old tune of Galashiels for his theme, he graced it with a wildness of complicated and beautiful variations . . . he then played your favourite air of Roslin Castle, with a number of beautiful variations, some of which I am certain were almost extempore. (I.x.208; letter x.95-6)

In fact he is able to join Willie as his accompanist at the dance at Brokenburn, where his playing meets the old man's qualified commendation. It is this participation in popular culture that Greenmantle condemns in the same breath as Darsie's passivity in the face of the future:

I would have gone on in the false gallop of compliment, but she cut me short. "And why," she said, "is Mr Latimer here, and in disguise, or at least assuming an office unworthy of a man of education? -- I beg pardon," she continued, -- "I would not give you pain, but surely making an associate of a person of that description -- "

She looked towards my friend Willie, and was silent. I felt heartily ashamed of myself . . . (I.xii.281; letter xii.125)

After Darsie's kidnap, of course, he no longer has the opportunity to go to dances. But Willie follows him into Cumberland, and, just before Darsie dons his skirt and mask for the journey to Crackenthorp's Inn, they are able to communicate by folk-song without Redgauntlet's people catching on. Once arrived at the inn, and still in drag, Darsie is able to signal his arrival to the blind Willie by asking him, "whether he could not play a Scottish air?" (III.vi.187; chapter xix.345). Greenmantle's advice at Brokenburn points out a parallel between Darsie's relation to the plot and his relation to popular culture. She tells him then that it is unmanly to passively await his destiny, but he continues to do so anyway, with her ultimate approval; and she tells him it is beneath him to participate in popular culture, but he continues to do so anyway (Dr. Dryasdust's Conclusion mentions Willie ending his days in Darsie's hall, so hopefully Lillas was reconciled to their friendship by then: III. "Conclusion".328; "Conclusion".401).

However, the link between plot and folk-culture goes beyond the bare parallel in Darsie and Greenmantle's attitudes to them. At two different points in the text, at a crucial point in its story, folk-culture and its carriers appear: not to intervene in the action as Meg Merrilies does, indeed, not as those whose actions are moving the plot along at these points, but as something like a chorus, a voice external to the action but shaping its meaning.

One of these occasions is Darsie's first sight of the hereditary horseshoe frown of the Redgauntlets on his captor's forehead. This happens in II.vi (chapter vi), when Darsie is called upon by an incompetent and corrupt English magistrate, as his only chance of escaping Redgauntlet's legal guardianship, to swear that he has never seen him before. Darsie realizes that he has seen a man with that expression on his face before, and cannot so swear, and so remains in Redgauntlet's power. He had seen this man, he realizes at this time, as an infant; he had seen him when Redgauntlet had stormed their mother's garden to abduct the children, and their mother had barely managed to save Darsie from his clutches, although he succeeded in taking Lillias: Darsie only learns these latter details in his conversation with his sister. In the presence of Justice Foxley, the original trauma does not come immediately to mind. The memory of Redgauntlet's face is mediated by Wandering Willie's Tale: it was this story which first recalled the horseshoe frown, and the physical confrontation with it recalls this previous recollection at the same time as the content of the memory itself.

I had heard such a look described in an old tale of *diablerie*, which it was my chance to be entertained with not long since . . .

The tale, when told, awakened a dreadful vision of infancy, which the withering and blighting look now fixed on me again forced on my recollection, but with much more vivacity . . . "The young man will no longer deny that he has seen me before," said he [Redgauntlet] to the Justice, in a tone of complacency; "and I trust he will now be reconciled to my temporary guardianship . . ." (II.vi.130-1; chapter vi.192-3)

The horseshoe frown is important for the plot because it alone pulls Darsie into a closer relation with his uncle both by the memory it evokes and because Darsie has it too. It seems to embody the destiny for which Darsie is waiting, a destiny which will lift him out of his intersubjective dependence on Alan and fix his identity as a social and historical given. For the immediate threat to Darsie from Redgauntlet is not the threat of their father-figures to Julia Mannering or Isabella Vere, the threat of frustrated love or forced marriage:¹¹ it is rather a marriage with history itself (as he understands it) that Hugh Redgauntlet tries to force on his nephew. The mark on his brow tempts Darsie to believe that this is inevitable, that it has, in a sense, already happened.

. . . I answered him by a look of the same kind, and catching the reflection of my countenance in a large antique mirror which stood before me, I started again at the real or imaginary resemblance which my countenance, at that moment, bore to that of Herries. Surely my fate is somehow strangely interwoven with that of this strange and mysterious individual. (II.vii.148; chapter vii.199-200)

¹¹ This is not to forget that the ultimate meaning of Julia's reconciliation with her father, or Isabella's kidnapping by hers, is their integration at the level of narrative discourse into the historical; that is, into cognitive discourse, rather than a particular role for them in actual historical events (although Isabella is later forced to agree to a marriage that constitutes such a role as well).

In fact, as we have seen, Darsie's fate is to gain a sister rather than a role in history. The fixed identity that Redgauntlet offers him is rejected, and Darsie returns to the provisional identities of intersubjectivity.¹²

The other occasion on which folk-culture accompanies a plot-development is more curious. This is when Darsie is knocked unconscious at the fishing station by Redgauntlet's men, before he is abducted across the Solway. Willie is indeed present at the riot, but when Darsie comes to, it is Willie's wife Maggie who is by his side.¹³

Aware of my utterly captive condition, I groaned betwixt bodily pain and mental distress.

A voice by my bedside whispered, in a whining tone, "Whisht a-ye, hinnie -- whisht a-ye; haud your tongue, like a gude bairn -- ye have cost us dear aneugh already. My hinnie's clean gane now."

Knowing, as I thought, the phraseology of the wife of the itinerant musician, I asked her where her husband was, and whether he had been hurt.

"Broken," answered the dame, "all broken to pieces; fit for nought but to be made spunks of -- the best blood that was in Scotland."

"Broken? -- blood? -- is your husband wounded? has there been bloodshed -- broken limbs?"

"Broken limbs? -- I wish," answered the beldame, "that my hinnie had broken the best bane in his body, before he had broken his fiddle, that was the best blood in Scotland . . ." (II.iv.78-9; chapter iv.171)

This is a bizarre interlude. Willie, Maggie tells us, has lost his fiddle, but he has another by the time he comes to serenade

¹² Alan too is offered a fixed identity by a mirror, as an alternative to his correspondence with Darsie, when he tries to see how he must appear in Greenmantle's eyes: "The mirror was not unnaturally called in to aid; and that cabinet-counsellor pronounced me rather short, thick-set, with a cast of features fitter, I trust, for the bar than the ball . . ." (I.viii.178; letter viii.82).

¹³ We have met Maggie, or Meg as her husband at one point calls her, in letter x, just before Wandering Willie's Tale and the dance at Brokenburn. She resembles Meg Merrilees in more than name: "Beside him sat his female companion, in a man's hat, a blue coat, which seemed also to have been an article of male apparel, and a red petticoat" (I.x.206; letter x.94).

Darsie in II.ix (chapter ix), and no more mention is made of the original loss. What its equation of the fiddle with the body signifies is also difficult to grasp. Its initial reduction of Darsie to an infantile state, being comforted through a bad dream by the maternal Maggie, is repeated when she gives him a sleeping potion:

... the appearance of things around me became indistinct; ... the woman's form seemed to multiply itself, and to flit in various figures around me, bearing the same lineaments as she herself did. I remember also that the discordant noises and cries of those without the cottage seemed to die away in a hum like that with which a nurse hushes her babe. At length I fell into a deep sound sleep ... (II.iv.81; chapter iv.172)

In neither Willie's mediation of the sign of the horseshoe nor his wife's initiation of Darsie into his ordeal is folk-culture something that can be known, as Meg Merrilies can be known. It is a signifier rather than a signified, an oblique indication of the significance of Darsie's experiences. Both horseshoe and lullaby point to the maternal as the origin that will be revealed to Darsie if only he will wait: the mother who saved him from an upbringing as a Jacobite, although at the cost of separation from Lillas; the mother who is the origin of the plot that is resolved with the reunification of brother and sister.

Lillas, as she describes their mother's clash with their uncle, opens the possibility that their mother might be to blame for a lack of "confidence" towards her brother-in-law, as if the origin of the plot might be a failure to exercise the virtue that ultimately resolves it:

"... our uncle, whose proud disposition might, perhaps, have been soothed by the offer of her confidence, revolted against the distrustful and suspicious manner in which Lady Darsie Redgauntlet acted towards him. She basely abused, he said, the unhappy circumstances in which he was placed, in order to deprive him of his natural privilege of protecting and educating the infants, whom nature and law, and the will of their father, had committed to his charge . . . " (III.v.127; chapter xviii.321)

Thus interpreted, their mother's action in hiding Darsie would fit with the pattern that we have seen in *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, where the autonomous action of the mother, acting alone or in defiance of the father-figure, begins the chain of events that require resolution in the plot of the novel. But there is nothing else in *Redgauntlet* to suggest that keeping Darsie out of Redgauntlet's hands was not a wise thing to do, that letting Redgauntlet raise him would not have inevitably placed him in the situation that, as it turns out, he falls into by accident.

Redgauntlet is not Darsie's destiny: he is only the inadvertant means of his achieving it. Darsie, before the distraction of his kidnapping, was looking in the right place from the beginning:

Before that time, as I have often told you, I have but a recollection of unbounded indulgence on my mother's part, and the most tyrannical exertion of caprice on my own. I remember still how bitterly she sighed, how vainly she strove to soothe me, while, in the full energy of despotism, I roared like ten bull calves, for something which it was impossible to procure for me. She is dead, that kind, that ill-rewarded mother! I remember the long faces -- the darkened room -- the black hangings -- the mysterious impression made upon my mind by the hearse and mourning coaches, and the difficulty which I had to reconcile all this to the disappearance of my mother. I do not think I had before this event formed any idea of death, or that I had even heard of that final consummation of all that lives. The first acquaintance which I formed with it deprived me of my only relation. (I.i.13-14; letter i.16-17)

This is the "history" that he asks Alan, the lawyer, to turn into "a condescendence of facts and circumstances" in the paragraph quoted earlier. In *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf*, not only does the mother take the blame for initiating the vicissitudes of the plot, she tends to be omitted from the cognitive discourse of the novel altogether. Here also she is never constituted as an object of knowledge in the discourse of the law as Darsie requests. Alan does not reveal her as the origin of Darsie's history, Lillas does. She first appears in Darsie's dialogue with Alan, and returns within the renewed feminine discourse of Darsie with Lillas.

What the folk-culture indications of Darsie's identity achieve is an identification of feminine autonomy from history and politics, the autonomy maintained in intersubjective discourse, with the extra-cognitive practice of music and storytelling. Hence the destruction of Willie's fiddle in the riot at the fishing station: Darsie's loss of his power to create himself in dialogue with Alan is figured at the time by Willie's loss of his power to create music. In fact Darsie continues to write himself without Alan's replies, and Willie continues to play without his precious Cremona violin. The performative power of folk-culture, its ability to do rather than know, is also alluded to at just the point where Darsie is returned to feminine discourse, when Lillas exercises a confidence towards him that he had not expected from his love-object:

...he felt only such a confusion of ideas at the difference between the being whom he had imagined, and her with whom he was now in contact, that it seemed to him like the effect of witchcraft. (III.iv.112; chapter xvii.316)

Similarly, when Liliass asks directly who he thinks she is, Darsie finds that he would only be able to name her frankness, her assumption of intersubjective correspondence, in the context of a folk-tale:

Had the question been asked in that enchanted hall in Fairy-land, where all interrogations must be answered with absolute sincerity, Darsie had certainly replied, that he took her for the most frank-hearted and ultra-liberal lass that had ever lived since Mother Eve eat [*sic.*] the pippin without paring. But as he was still on middle-earth, and free to avail himself of a little polite deceit, he barely answered, that he believed he had the honour of speaking to the niece of Mr Redgauntlet. (III.iv.117-8; chapter xvii.318)

Liliass's confidence, her frankness, is not the consequence of a magical transformation, nor does she owe it to the mythical Mother Eve who bequeathed her such a shameless nature; it is rather the consequence of her sisterhood to Darsie, the benevolent gift of their real mother. But in the world that they can make with their words they are as free from the identities that history tries to force on them as any fairy queen could make them.

(iv) *Redgauntlet* as anti-historical novel

It is beginning to seem as if the reference in this novel to a political grouping that actually existed, namely the Jacobites, and its inclusion of a character representing a man who actually existed, namely Charles Edward Stewart, give this novel cognitive claims only for the purpose of then abandoning them. The real history that these figures represent is not, after all, the business of a novel. The proper subject for a novel is rather the sort of creativity in words enjoyed by Alan and Darsie, by Willie Stevenson, and by Darsie and Lillas; a practice represented not by a soldier or a politician but by a mother.

To support such a claim one could cite the rejection of knowledge as the function of discourse by characters within the text itself. Alan, to whose legalistic brain Darsie appeals for a knowable version of his identity, is obliged to abandon his cognitive capacities once he is on Darsie's trail. He is not the only lawyer to do this: Justice Foxley has been refusing to know who his neighbour Mr Ingoldsby is for years: a use of words to remain ignorant that Peter Peebles' naming of Ingoldsby as Herries of Birrenswork nearly makes impossible (II.vii.153-4; chapter vii.202). Tam Trumbull, too, conveniently keeps himself ignorant of the origins and destinations of the contraband in which he deals, by never allowing them to be named in his presence (II.xii.295, 297; chapter xii.259-60). It is in company such as this that Alan refuses to recognize that the handwriting on the letter he is carrying is Nanty Ewart's (III.iii.72; chapter

xvi.299), and refuses to know that Father Buonaventure is the priest that he is pretending to be (III.iii.68; chapter xvi.298).

This refusal to admit to speech facts that are actually perfectly well-known is in all of these cases a strategy to avoid them becoming objects of the law's cognitive discourse. In other words, they are instances of the subordination of the cognitive function of discourse to a performative end. And the novel itself does something very similar with the Jacobites as a political party. It has the cognitive discourse of the earlier Scottish novels at its disposal to describe the Jacobites in terms of the social, political and religious context that has made them what they are, and that will produce their eventual defeat. This is after all what Scott did in *Waverley* and *Rob Roy*. But in this novel, the Jacobites are *not* defeated by the historical anachronism of their cause. They are defeated at the level of the personal, the feminine, the *domestic*:

"I did not suppose that my loyal subjects would think so poorly of me, as to use my depressed circumstances as a reason for forcing themselves into my domestic privacies, and stipulating arrangements with their King regarding matters, in which the meanest hinds claim the privilege of thinking for themselves. In affairs of state and public policy, I will ever be guided as becomes a prince, by the advice of my wisest counsellors; in those which regard my private affections, and my domestic arrangements, I claim the same freedom of will which I allow to all my subjects, and without which a crown were less worth wearing than a beggar's bonnet." (III.ix.270-1; chapter xxii.377-8)

The Jacobites refuse to rise for Charlie because of his continuing attachment to a woman, the historical Clementina Walkinshaw, suspected of being a government agent. He refuses to get rid of her, not out of love, for he has thought about leaving her already,

but on the principle that his subjects can have no say in the private affairs of a prince.

The importance of Charles' stance here for the novel as a whole is that it accepts the division of the public and political sphere from the private and domestic one, and insists on the isolation of the latter from the former. It is not by his attachment to a woman that Charles is compromised, but by his granting equal status to the opposed political and the domestic spheres. If Scott's realist historical fiction defines itself as a way of knowing movements like the Jacobites as a political and social phenomenon, and in doing so opposes itself to the fiction of the private and the domestic, then *Redgauntlet* can no longer count as realist historical fiction, for the political phenomenon in question now *includes within itself the opposition of the political and the domestic*.

When *Redgauntlet* lets Darsie revert to male clothes on their arrival at Crackenthorp's Inn, he presumes that Darsie's time dressed as a woman will have functioned as a catharsis of his unmanly Hanoverian upbringing, and his abandoning them as an initiation into the realm of political action:

"I restore you to yourself, and trust you will lay aside all effeminate thoughts with this feminine dress. Do not blush at having worn a disguise to which kings and heroes have been reduced. It is when female craft or female cowardice find their way into a manly bosom, that he who entertains these sentiments should take eternal shame to himself for having done so." (III.ix.244; chapter xxli.367)

Darsie's transvestitism, as we have seen, far from giving him a new political self, has returned him to his old feminine one. But

politics itself has now become a matter of creating in words a convenient reality. The government delivers the *coup de grace* to the Jacobites not with superior military force, or a more contemporary ideology, or better economics, or anything that this novel could choose to *know*. It rather does so with that performative use of language that is the tactic of smugglers and of lawyers in a tight spot: the refusal to know.

"I do not," he said, "know this gentleman" -- (Making a profound bow to the unfortunate Prince) -- "I do not wish to know him; it is a knowledge which would suit neither of us." (III.x.313; chapter xxiii.394)

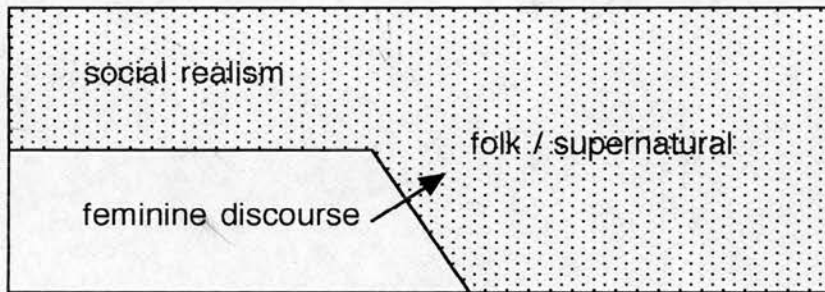
Judith Wilt has drawn attention to the way in which the collapse of the Jacobites in *Redgauntlet* repeats Jeanie Deans' interview with Queen Caroline in *The Heart of Midlothian*: in both cases, the outcome hangs on the position of a royal mistress, but in both cases also this is only so because politics has already been feminized, domesticated.¹⁴ Where Wilt understands this fact in terms of gender-politics in general, however, we can now see it as the outcome of Scott's long negotiation with feminine *fiction*, and with the subversive feminine fictionality that it carries. And as in *The Heart of Midlothian*, the allocation of the authority to bypass questions of truth and falsehood, to dictate that which constitutes the truth, to the *state*, guarantees a happy ending in which heroes and heroines can enter or remain in a world shaped by the conventions of feminine fiction. Jeanie and Effie can enjoy their rival versions of feminine happiness, Darsie and Alan and Lillias can go back to their rival versions of each

¹⁴ Wilt 125-128.

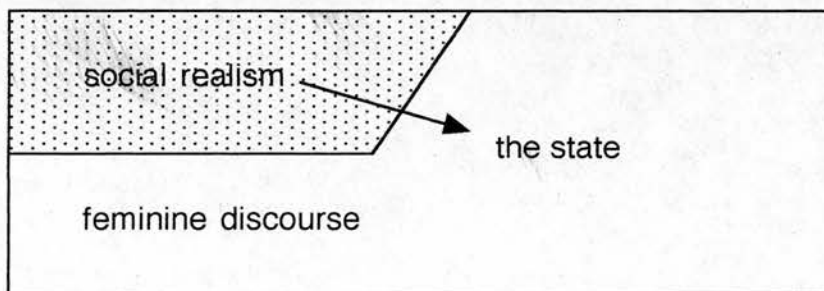
other, can be, in other words, subjects of their speech rather than objects of someone else's; they can be this, because they are subjects of a state which is both at work within history, and can decide what history is; at once the Law, and at the same time a great Mother, a creator of fictions. In it, Scott has found an alternative model for his own fictionalizing, one that he can admit as he never could the domestic novel.

Conclusion

At the end of chapter 3 I expressed the function of feminine discourse in the plots of Scott's first social-realist novels in the diagram below:



What we have found in *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Redgauntlet* is the exact reversal of this structure, with the role of agent in the latter part of the narrative taken by the state in place of a figure from folk culture:



The debt of this study to women Scott-critics, Ina Ferris, Jane Millgate, Tara Ghoshal Wallace and Judith Wilt, has often left me identifying with Scott's situation in relation to his female predecessors: I too, after all, have found myself writing in a predominantly female field of discourse, and have borrowed from it and quoted from it as a way of placing my text with regard to it, as a way of claiming some sort of originality for myself. But I am unlike Scott in another regard, for I have failed to find a way of turning that assimilation into a *plot*. My subject, indeed, has proved impossible to turn into a linear narrative, for the sets of relations between Scott and feminine discourse schematized above, and the allegorization of those relations that we examined in Part Two, cannot be arranged in a sequence that would demonstrate a *development* of Scott's relation to the domestic novel over the course of his career. *The Heart of Midlothian* is most obviously responsible for this, comparable as it is to *Redgauntlet*, yet coming before *The Monastery* or *Saint Ronan's Well*. But the fourth strategy that seems to be at work in the ending of *Old Mortality* as described in my introduction, and the omission from this thesis of other novels, particularly *The Antiquary* and *The Bride of Lammermoor*, also disrupt any attempt to impose an evolutionary pattern on the Waverley Novels as a whole.

What Scott's various uses of feminine discourse seem to reflect is not a development, but a set of narrative strategies available to Scott at *any* point in his career. Rather than maturing from novel to novel, Scott seems to have had recourse

to a particular strategy in response to the various innovations that he has made in the novels before: a recourse that can sometimes give the appearance of regression rather than progress. Hence the advent of social-realism in *Waverley* demands a fuller dramatization of its underlying presuppositions than was possible in that novel, and thus produces *Guy Mannering*; the abandonment of social realism for chivalric romance in *Ivanhoe* is similarly theorized after the fact in *The Monastery*. The importance of *Saint Ronan's Well* and *Redgauntlet* taken together, I suggest, is that they do the same thing for the Scottish Novels taken as a whole. They return to strategies already used in previous novels to renegotiate the relation to the domestic novel of Scott's social-realist novel as such. But the constituting role of that relation itself remains a constant through all the Scottish Waverley Novels.

Jane Millgate suggests "the need to take a fresh look at Scott's career as a novelist as a historical phenomenon taking place over a period of time."¹ What this thesis suggests is that examining Scott's novels as a historical phenomenon -- that is, placing them in the literary history of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novel -- *deconstructs* any sense of a developing career. When Ina Ferris places the Waverley Novels in literary history, she does so in relation to the periodical reviews. But she fails to demonstrate any shaping influence that the reviews, or the expectation of the reviews' reactions, might have had on the novels. A fundamental assumption of this thesis

¹ Millgate viii.

is that the meaning of a text can not be identified with its cultural consequences any more than it can be identified with the author's intentions. The appearance of a novel may be an historical fact; but the meaning of the novel is never reducible to that fact, for it has an internal structure which might have little or nothing to do with the nature of its reception. Literary history sheds light on the *Waverley Novels* when they are placed instead with regard to the domestic novel, for their place with regard to the domestic novel is the place of their enunciation, is a fact, that is, about the organization of the texts themselves.² That place remains unchanged, except for the fact that by 1824, that literary history also includes the *Waverley Novels*.

I have tended to play down the extent to which the Scottish novels set themselves apart from domestic fiction by the very pastness of the societies that they portray, for it seems to me that it is the very task of portraying whole societies, irrespective of their historical period, that is the great and problematic innovation that they make, as well as the one that will prove the most useful to the Victorian realists. But the distance in time between the settings of the novels and the modern Britain in which they were written does mean that Scott was open to the temptation, as I described it in chapter 1, to make the point of history the creation of that Britain. This is a temptation, indeed, that he resists, and it is by avoiding the implication that history has any endings at all that he generates his own problem with plot-endings.³

² See chapter 4 above, p.225.

³ See chapter 1 above, pp.52-3.

However, when Scott comes to portray modern Britain, the lowland Scotland of his young manhood, it is nevertheless a country where things have already come to an end. There are two versions of modern Britain to be found in the Waverley Novels. One is the present day of *The Antiquary*, which is the present day of the antiquary, and of the novelist only in so far as he is also an antiquary: a modern Britain empty of narrative except for that which can be recovered from the past, a personal past (Lovel's) that must be understood in contrast to the historical past, as the two are brought together in the experience of Oldbuck. This is, as I have suggested, a uniquely personal present for Scott. The other is the present day of *Saint Ronan's Well*, which is much more the present day of the novelist as such, the present day of 1824: a modern Britain empty of narrative except for that which can be recovered from the past, again a personal past (Clara's), but one that must now be understood in its relation, not to the historical past, but to the domestic novel. The present of *Saint Ronan's Well* is a present that is not available to be analysed in the social-realistic terms of Scott's usual narrative mode because it has already been analysed, already been written, in domestic fiction.

The reproduction within this contemporary setting of the opposition between Scott's more usual social-realist mode and the domestic novel has as a result a curious effect. It means that the novel's portrayal of contemporary society includes a reflection of the contemporary fragmentation of the novel into various competing genres. It includes in that portrayal the ubiquity in

contemporary society of the Waverley Novels themselves. It is not only domestic fiction that is the already-written here. And just as the inclusion in *Guy Mannering* of the feminine epistolary fiction brought into that novel the characteristic relationship between that fiction and its readership, so the inclusion in *Saint Ronan's Well* of the Aultoon as a sign for the Waverley Novels suggests an already established readership for them, the absence of which I began by suggesting was the necessity of Scott's social realism in the first place.

. . . [H]eteroglot language could not represent "other" social languages without also representing their relationships to *their* readers. . . . [In reading the heteroglot text,] I thus become aware of myself as a reader situated in a particular social space -- a reading space among differing reading acts. But I do not recognize this merely as an individual reader. This awareness dawns on me by putting me in the realm of a *kind* of reading act I share with some but decidedly do not share with others. In short, I attain -- however inchoately -- some sense of the audience to which I belong by becoming conscious, through heteroglot encounter, of that audience to which I cannot or will not belong.⁴

The fact that there was by 1824 an established readership for the Waverley Novels means that Scott can engage in exactly the sort of self definition that Klancher describes above in *Saint Ronan's Well*. But then *Saint Ronan's Well* is not a social realist novel. The Aultoon exists not as an analysis of contemporary Borders society but as a sign for the Scottish novels as a group. And if the description of the Aultoon in Scott's usual social-realist terms is included in order to allow his readers to recognize the alien nature of the rest of the novel, then they are also forced to

⁴ Klancher 11-12.

recognize their impotence in the fate of the contemporary cultural corruption that destroys Clara Mowbray.

Understood as an allegory of a fatal fragmentation of the reading public, a fragmentation that Scott's social realism set out to transcend but, for the sake of *Saint Ronan's Well* at least, now appears to participate in, the meaning of *Redgauntlet's* answer to the immediately preceding novel is much clearer. The performative language that closes *Guy Mannering* and *The Black Dwarf* takes its power from domestic fiction, because domestic fiction can be seen as enjoying an intersubjective and hence performative relationship with a particular type of readership that the Waverley Novels did not have. But their huge success means that the very anonymity of their readers has become a sense of audience: for the anonymity of the reader of a social-realist novel is the anonymity of the subject of a modern nation-state.⁵ The state takes on the performative role earlier filled by gypsies and madmen because it can now stand for the *national* readership of the Waverley Novels:

The community of the Waverley novels and the community of their readers created each other as an enabling environment for the whole century, precisely because the great fact about them was that they were faster written and better paid for and more widely read than any books in the world. Their abundance, their pervasiveness, seemed to fashion again, as a media event, that community which, as Scots peasants, as chivalric brothers, the plots of Scott's novels hinted was lost and must again be found.⁶

⁵ Julia Kristeva suggests that "[i]n the narrative, the speaking subject constitutes itself as the subject of a family, clan, or state group . . ." ("The Novel as Polylogue," *Desire in Language* 174). I am suggesting that the older sense of belonging to a people implied in the epic becomes, in the social-realist novel, a new sense of belonging to a nation-state.

⁶ Wilt 3.

And it is the state, as author of the nation, that guarantees a readership for realism.

This creation of a national readership for the novel is perhaps the *Waverley Novels*' greatest bequest to the nineteenth century, making possible a reinscription of didactic purpose in the Victorian novel. But this is not a fact about the meaning of the *Waverley Novels* themselves. The meaning of the *Waverley Novels* that is emerging in the work of the women mentioned above and, I hope, in this thesis, is more likely to create a readership for the *Waverley Novels* in the late twentieth century. It is by placing Scott in literary history that we discover the terms and limitations of his narrators' historical discourse; and, by a similar paradox, it is by placing him firmly in literary history that we find, not the Scott of the Victorians, or the Scott who made the Victorians, but a Scott for our own time.

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